

# Disability Now

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1993 is European Year of Older People and Solidarity Between Generations. It was launched at this year's Age Resource Awards, where the David Hobman award for inter-generational activity went to Magic Me, a project bringing schoolchildren and elderly people together for creative activities. Here, Mary Bezzina (left) and Florrie Jupp meet pupils from Herimatare School, Tower Hamlets.

**CALLING ALL SCOTS**  
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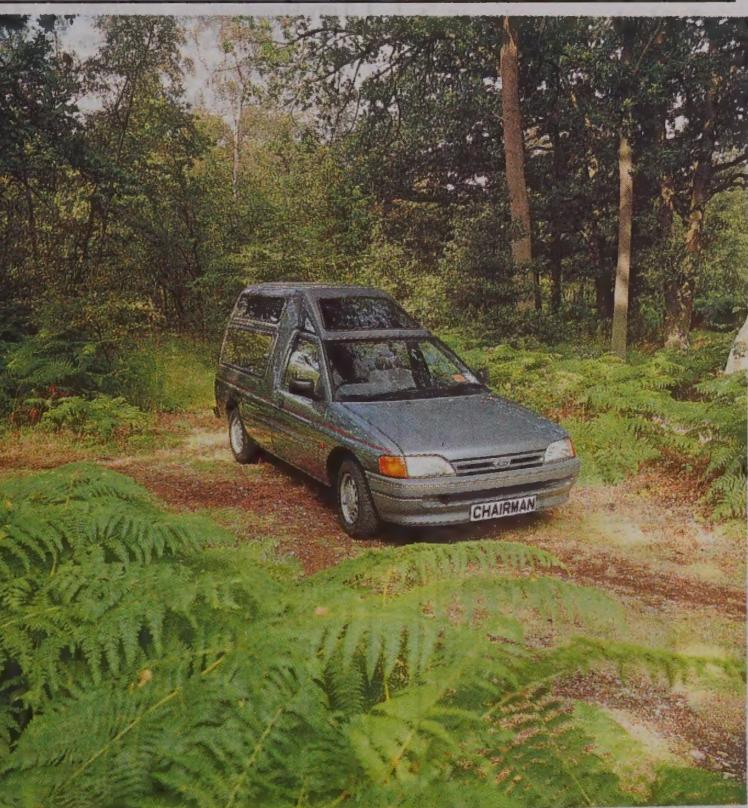
## Children with spina bifida have to wait

Children with spina bifida in Northern Ireland are waiting up to four months and then having their corrective surgery cancelled because children with emergency fractures have to come first.

The fracture clinic at the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children is open only one afternoon a week and emergency fracture cases have risen by 65 per cent since 1987.

The Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (ASBAH) says that Northern Ireland has one of the highest spina bifida birth rates in the world. It is calling on the hospital to set up a fully-staffed, multi-disciplinary clinic.

ASBAH regional coordinator Mita Harvey said: "We've been told by the hospital that it plans to appoint more surgical staff, but there are no indications when the appointments will be made. We fear that the next time there is a surge in patients coming to the clinic, children with spina bifida will be forced to the back of the queue again."



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## Plans for new ILF 'a dog's dinner'

Government plans for the new Independent Living Fund (ILF) have been condemned as "a dog's dinner" by ILF vice-chairman Pauline Thompson. "The golden days of the ILF are coming to an end," she warned. "It will be very different after the 1st April."

Ms Thompson was commenting on a Department of Social Security (DSS) memo, leaked to *DN*, which discusses how the replacement fund might operate. "There is no mention of the clients' interests," she said. "These proposals are no more than a budget constraining exercise."

She was also annoyed that the trustees of the ILF had not been consulted.

The memo says that the ILF and a local authority may have to agree jointly that a person is eligible for the Fund. This would give councils the power to veto applications.

Virginia Alison, the Spastics Society's benefits expert, fears the veto could be used if councils were short of money.

"The DSS wants to weaken the authority of the ILF. It is difficult to see how it can be independent when local authorities can veto applications," she added.

The £500 a week ceiling on individual payments - £60 less than the current ILF limit in London - which would apply to people whose condition had deteriorated as well as to new applicants.

The £500 would cover the cost of services equivalent to what the council would spend on residential or nursing care, topped up in cash by the new Fund. People with care needs over £500 a week would be expected to go into residential

*Continued on page 5*

## Housing under threat

Disability campaigners and housing experts fear that plans to cut Housing Association (HA) grants will lead to a steep fall in accessible homes built in Britain.

The Housing Corporation, the Government agency which funds HAs, is under Treasury pressure to reduce HA grants from 72 per cent to 55 per cent by 1995. It is considering limiting Government funding to a group of high-performing, financially strong HAs.

Of three divisions, only the top group would be assured of funding. Three quarters of the others would lose it.

Bert Massie, director of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR), believes the plans would be disastrous for disabled people.

"Most homes built for wheelchair users are only just big enough as it is. If HAs have

their funding cut or stopped, they will need to reduce costs, which will mean smaller, inaccessible houses."

He also fears that disabled people will be forced to pay steep rent increases for accessible units. "Disabled people have to pay high enough rents as it is. It has got to the point where you have to either have a large salary or be on income support to afford the rent."

The National Wheelchair Housing Association Group (NATWAG), which includes Habinteg, Walbrook and the John Grooms Association, are to meet Housing Minister Sir George Young on 15 February.

Caroline Cayzer, director of Habinteg, which builds 200 accessible homes a year, said: "There's no doubt that if the plans go ahead, our capacity to build accessible housing could

*Continued on page 2*

# Parent beats council

A mother has won her four-year fight against Devon County Council over her disabled child's special educational needs.

Lesley Gross contested a statement for her 10-year-old son Ryan which said he should receive "up to" five hours help a week. Mrs Gross feared this was too vague and could be used to reduce the level of support.

When the council refused to change the wording, she complained to Education Secretary John Patten. He upheld her appeal in January. It will now be made clear that Ryan should have five hours.

Mrs Gross said: "I'm delighted. Although this does not set a legal precedent I hope it will encourage others to challenge councils over vaguely worded statements."

The council said the ruling would make no difference to the actual level of support Ryan gets.



Esther Cruice (above with Wigan rugby star Martin Offiah) and Peter Hull (right with tv presenter Mike Morris and footballer George Best) have won the 1992 Daily Express/Yardley Gold Parallel Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year Awards. Mr Hull won three swimming golds in the Paralympics. Ms Cruice won a gold in the 400m and silver in the 100m and 200m. As well as a tro-



phy, they won £1,000 each towards training costs.

## Deaf pupils 'not properly taught'

Many deaf children are being taught by unqualified staff, according to the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS).

The NDCS estimates that the UK lacks 477 qualified teachers of deaf children.

It wants the Government to

instruct education authorities to make sure all teachers in their area who work with deaf children go on a specialist course to get the qualification required by law.

At the moment, only teachers with a class of deaf children

must get the special qualification within three years of starting the job.

The NDCS wants this extended to include all teachers in hearing impaired units and peripatetic teachers who advise teachers in mainstream schools, as this is where 90 per cent of deaf children are educated.

# Community care: confusion mounts

Most doctors are still unclear about the new community care arrangements which come into force on 1 April, according to a new survey by the British Medical Association (BMA).

The survey of 330 GPs and ten social services departments reveals that:

- \* over half the doctors are "not at all confident" of having care plans in place by April
- \* nine out of ten thought the scheme would be underfunded
- \* and almost 8 of ten said they had not been consulted about councils' community care plans.

The BMA fears the muddle may mean elderly and "vulnerable" people are kept in hospital until support in the community is guaranteed. This would cause longer delays for hospital treatment.

BMA community care committee secretary Andrew Vallance-Owen said: "This confirms our fears that people at the sharp end have not really been involved in discussions about what will happen in April. The message to the Government is that there is still a fair degree of confusion."

Meanwhile, there have been claims that the Government is advising councils not to declare disabled and elderly people's needs if they cannot pay for them.

Official guidance from the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) leaked to *The Guardian* newspaper declares: "The assessment process should be structured so that the needs of the individual ... are identified

before consideration is given to any requirements for service provision. Such consideration will need to take into account ... the resources available to the authority."

Junior Health Minister Tim Yeo said: "The BMA survey shows there has been a communication hiccup, but there is time to resolve this problem."

On the SSI document, he said: "The guidance covered a wide range of points which authorities should bear in mind in finalising their arrangements. It did not encourage authorities to avoid telling elderly and disabled people of their rights and needs. We want to provide people with as much information as possible, but we don't want authorities to provide services they cannot afford."

\* Vivien Lindow, a carer, and Blodwen Brewster, a psychiatric survivor, have joined the Community Care Support Force. The Force will give advice to councils and health authorities during the run-up to 1 April.

## Disability Now

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**Editor** Mary Wilkinson  
**Assistant Editor**  
Alison Rowat  
**Reporter**  
Tim Russell

**Editorial/Production**  
**Assistant**  
Catherine Frame

**Secretary**  
Tracy Scollin

**Subscriptions**  
**Manager** Karen King  
**Assistant**  
Jennifer Whitehead  
Tel: 071-383 4575

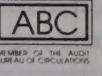
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# Ombudsman raps councils over services

Two local authorities have been rapped by the Local Government Ombudsman for delays in providing assessments and adaptations for disabled people.

In December, Local Government Ombudsman Patricia Thomas ruled against Wirral social services in three separate cases. She found "maladministration causing injustice" for three people who had waited

over two years for help.

Then last month, Ms Thomas ruled against Bolton social services, also for delays in assessing the needs of a disabled person.

Bolton was fined £250 for maladministration after a woman with spina bifida was left waiting ten months to be assessed.

Ms Thomas said disabled

people who approached a council for help with adaptations had the right to expect assistance with "reasonable speed".

She added that if qualified council staff were unavailable to make assessments within a reasonable period of time - at least within four or five months - the council should look at other means of providing the assessment.

John Keep, project officer of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) is collecting complaints against councils for possible legal action (DN, December). "This is definitely a nationwide problem. We've received over 200 complaints in the past three months from people who have had difficulties getting services."



Dance away: Bisakha Sarker shows Mary Rae some dance movements in Mill Hill Day Centre in Blackburn. The Blackburn pilot project was one of three exploring what disabled people could get out of South Asian dancing. A report will be published on 11 March. Contact Donna McDonald, tel: 081-876 7341.

## Harassment high

Disabled people are "particularly at risk" of experiencing sexual harassment at work or in training, according to a report by a national advice and counselling group.

Of the 6,232 people who contacted Women Against Sexual Harassment in 1991/92, 935 (15 per cent) had a disability. 831 of the disabled people were women and 104 men.

The report said many disabled people are too afraid of being sacked to complain. And employers often fail to recognise the problem because they do not think it is one that affects disabled people.

£3.50, tel: 071-721 7593.

## Councils watch out

Local authorities are to be quizzed about the effectiveness, efficiency and cost of their services to disabled people and carers.

The Audit Commission, a local government watchdog, has published a list of "performance indicators". The aim is to draw information out of councils so the public can judge their performance.

Among other things, councils will be asked how easy it is for disabled people to use council buildings and the time it takes for statements of special educational need to be prepared. The results will be published nationally and in local newspapers.

For a list of indicators see Charting a Course, £6, HMSO, tel: 071-873 9090.



In the community

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE PART IN THE U.K.'S BIGGEST SWIMMING MARATHON?

We want swimmers to help raise funds for The Spastics Society in the BT National Swimathon '93.

So why not take the plunge and do your bit to help charity and get fit!

This four day event between 4 - 7 March 1993 aims to raise at least £1.5 million for The Spastics Society and two other national charities, the British Red Cross and The NSPCC.

For further information and an entry form telephone the Swimathon Hotline on 071-379 9595.

Also, one tenth of the money raised will be used to create more local sporting activities for people with a disability.

The marathon challenge is a 5,000 metre swim at swimming pools throughout the country and you can swim on your own or as part of a team.

THE SPASTICS SOCIETY  
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British Red Cross

Forms must be returned by Monday 22 February 1993.

# Schools to publish special needs policies

Alison Rowat reports

Schools will have to publish and report on their policies for teaching children with special educational needs (SEN), under new Government proposals made in January.

Information such as the name and telephone number of the school's SEN co-ordinator, and policy for ensuring pupils have full access to the National Curriculum, will have to be made available to parents.

Schools Minister Eric Forth

announced his proposed amendments to the Education Bill, now in committee stage in the Commons, at a meeting of the Special Educational Consortium (SEC). The SEC, whose membership includes the Royal National Institute for the Blind and the Spastics Society, was set up last year to campaign for disabled pupils' rights (DN, October 1992).

Spastics Society research officer Anne Leonard said: "It's a small concession in the light of the major problems that still remain - inadequate resources

to ensure that what the Bill promises actually gets delivered."

Mr Forth also proposed an amendment to make it clear that local education authorities would have the "ability" to provide specialist support services such as educational psychology, to all special needs pupils, including those in grant-maintained schools. No mention is made of extra money.

\*The Spastics Society launched a "Make a Statement" campaign last month. It urges the

Government to ensure that disabled children and their parents have greater choice in education, better access to mainstream schools, more involvement in decision-making and that enough money is provided to meet their needs.

People are asked to send "Make a Statement" postcards to their MP, and there is to be a lobby of Parliament on 26 January.

To take part, please contact the Campaigns Department, tel: 071-636 5020 ext 231.

## Lottery promises millions

Charities could scoop millions of pounds a year from a national lottery, according to the Government.

But charities fear it could take away more than it gives.

Publishing the National Lottery Bill in December, National Heritage Secretary Peter Brooke estimated there could be £1.5 billion of tickets bought each year.

Out of this would come prize money and administration costs. The rest would be divided equally between "good causes": charities, the arts, sports, projects to celebrate the year 2000 and heritage schemes.

Until the Treasury decides how much tax to levy on the lottery, voluntary groups can only guess how much will be available to them. Estimates have put the figure at anything between £60 million and £200 million a year. Funds would be distributed via a new National

### Lottery Charities Board.

Last year, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) estimated that competing with the lottery could lose charities up to £232 million a year (DN, August 1992).

NCVO director Judy Weleminsky called the lottery "an ambitious and bold scheme which should undoubtedly benefit the good causes".

But NCVO insists there have to be certain safeguards for the voluntary sector, such as a guarantee that the lottery would not lead to reduced central and local government support for charities.

To keep charities' incomes steady, says the NCVO, the Government should consider introducing measures such as a VAT refund scheme. The NCVO estimates this could boost charities' income by £300 million a year.



The Snowdon Award Scheme, which helps young disabled people with the extra costs of further education or training, is to be the official beneficiary of the 1993 London Marathon, sponsored by NutraSweet. Pictured (left to right) Gary Waller, MP for Keighley, Lord St John of Bletso, Vivian Mullet, who has had a Snowdon Award, and Lord Snowdon.

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## Honours for disability world

Paralympic athletes Tanni Grey and Chris Holmes each picked up an MBE in the New Year Honours to add to the medals they won in Barcelona (DN, October 1992).

Other awards included:  
CBE: Anne Weinstock, chief executive of the Rathbone Society, direc-

tor Training and Enterprise Council, Manchester, for services to training of people with learning difficulties.  
OBE: Evelyn Glennie, musician (see page 7); Sally Greengross, director, Age Concern England, Charles Moore, director, Disabled Living Foundation.

MBE: Anne Macfarlane, first vice-president of Kingston Association of

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### Driving Bill doing well

A Bill to allow disabled people to become paid driving instructors looks likely to become law.

Sir John Hannam's private members bill passed its second reading in the Commons on 11 December and is now in its committee stage.

With Government and all-party support, the Road Traffic (Driving Instruction by Disabled Persons) Bill looks likely to succeed.

At present, two of the tests driving instructors need to pass are done in cars with manual rather than automatic transmission, barring some disabled drivers. Sir John's bill would create a special category of disabled instructors qualified only to teach in automatic cars.

### Support for carers

153 MPs have signed an early day motion supporting a better financial deal for carers.

The motion supports the Caring Costs Campaign, a coalition of voluntary groups, in its fight for an independent income for Britain's six million carers. It urges the Government to review the financial support given to older carers and debate what it costs to provide care and support at home.

### Charities Act in force

The Charities Act came into force in January. Among the new rules, charities with a gross annual income of £5,000 or more must state their registered status on official publications.

### Petitions mount

Another four petitions in support of anti-discrimination legislation were presented to Parliament in January. This brings the total received to 16.

Disabled People; Kate Moore, chairman, Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities; Denise Smith, for services to disability sport; Gwilym John Thomas, headteacher, Ravensbourne Special School, Essex; Gillian Thomson, chairperson, Scottish Dyslexia Association.

BEM: Brinley Adams, quality controller, Remploy; George Bentley, leading hand, Remploy; Ronald Nicholls, for services to disability sport.

# Disabled people 'disgust'

Non-disabled men tend to feel "disgusted and irritated" by disabled people, while women are more fearful, according to new research by the British Psychological Society.

A series of video clips of people with a wide range of disabilities was shown to 151 members of the public, 128 medical students, and 24 professional carers.

Researchers discovered that people with communication impairments were particularly annoying to the audience. One said: "I was irritated with him because I couldn't understand him, and I was irritated by myself for feeling that way."

The study was done by Dr John Barret and Glyn Hudson of Bristol University.

Dr Barret said: "The findings have serious implications for community care as they show people have a very limited understanding or knowledge of disability."

Phil Friend, a disability awareness trainer, said: "The findings are disturbing and show we have a long way to go."

# Tourists must take pot luck

Disabled people are having to rely on pot luck when booking a holiday, says *Holiday Which?*, a magazine published by the Consumers' Association.

Staff at some major tour operators were "uninformed to downright obstructive" when asked to recommend wheelchair friendly hotels.

One woman had to change her colostomy bag with aircraft-

staff holding blankets around her because the toilets were too small.

As well as anonymously telephoning tour operators, *Holiday Which?* sent an expert and two wheelchair-users to 19 hotels and apartment complexes in Tenerife and nine hotels in Benidorm, and questioned 50 disabled tourists. Tenerife had only one accessible toilet, while

Benidorm had none.

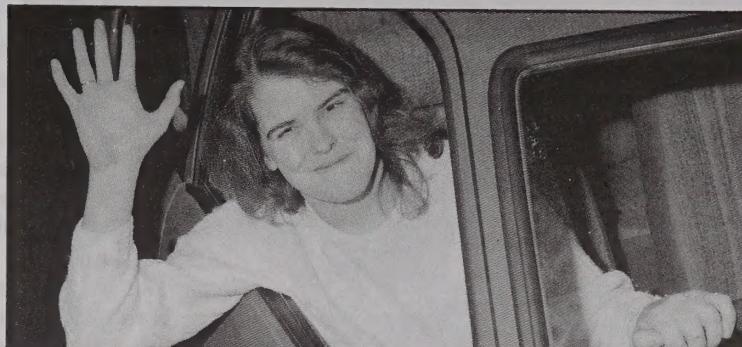
"We found that poor advice is the norm and can lead to misery, frustration and even pain," said editor Patricia Yates.

"Staff seem far more interested in selling an unsuitable holiday than giving proper information for disabled people, and even helpful staff were often hampered by a lack of hard information."

Among the tips offered to disabled travellers: check and double check the accommodation's accessibility, insisting that the tour operator sends a fax with your requirements. Alternatively, write to them yourself, keeping copies.

Subscription Department, Consumers' Association, PO Box 44, Hertford X, SG14 1SH.

## Claire coming to Disability Now



Disabled journalist Claire Meade from Essex (right), picked up the keys to her first car in December, bought with the help of Motability.

Claire, 21, has just finished a journalism course at Harlow college and is looking for a job.

DN has invited her in to the office for some work experience. Watch out for her in the April issue!

### ILF plans 'a dog's dinner'

Continued from page 1

care or a nursing home.

Ms Thompson said: "It is likely that £500 will not be enough for many severely disabled people. If it isn't, then it seems very unfair that they should have to go into care. Such a proposal will put people

off applying."

Sally Witcher of the umbrella group Disability Alliance said: "The proposals are a real step backwards because they take power away from disabled people by denying people with high care costs the right to live independently.

She is also unhappy that the fund will be cash-limited to £4

million for new claimants and £117 million for existing claimants in 1993-94. "People applying at the end of the year when there is less money available will be less likely to get funding."

A spokesperson for the DSS said the Department never commented on leaked documents.

## Workers sacked

Fifteen visually-impaired workers are to be sacked from two sheltered workshops because Southwark Borough Council in London has axed their funding. But they have been promised new jobs by the council.

Social services director Dennis Simpson said: "We plan to assess each individual to determine their disabilities with the purpose of matching them with a suitable job, and we will adapt the workplace accordingly."

Alastair Kent, director of Action for Blind People, which runs one of the workshops, said: "I'm concerned the jobs offered will be unsuitable and the support they are given insufficient."

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# Council tax reductions: apply now

Pete Challis reports

On 1 April 1993 the council tax replaces the poll tax. It is a tax on domestic properties, not on people. But it has a personal element.

Understanding how the new tax works is the key to ensuring that, as a disabled person or carer, you don't pay more than you should.

The size of the bill depends on which of eight bands, A-H, the property has been placed in and the number of people living there. The resident(s) with the strongest legal interest will be liable. So freeholders take precedence over tenants, tenants over licensees, etc.

Some council tax bills will qualify for discounts. If someone lives alone, they will only get a 75 per cent bill. If no-one lives in a property, the bill will be 50 per cent, unless the property is exempt. Some people (eg students, those under 18, people who are "severely mentally impaired") are treated as "invisible" when it comes to working out the bill.

Anyone who lives alone or with other people, all of whom are "invisible", will get a 25 per cent discount. Those who live alone and who are also "invisible" will get 50 per cent off.

When applying, here are the important questions to ask yourself:

**1. Are there parts of my home needed by someone with a disability which add to its value?**

If so, the "disability reduction scheme" brings the tax payable down a band. If your home is already in Band A, no reduction applies.

The property must be the home of someone who is "substantially and permanently disabled" and a reduction applies

## 2. Is the home unoccupied?

A property qualifies for exemption from council tax on every day it is unoccupied because the person who normally lives there is living permanently in hospital, residential or nursing care.

Exemption also applies if



Ensure you get the discounts and rebates you are entitled to

if one of the rooms is used predominantly by a disabled person, eg as a treatment room or where a couple need separate bedrooms because of one partner's disability.

It also applies where an extra kitchen or bathroom is needed or where enough turning space is required to use a wheelchair indoors. Apply to the local council for this reduction - your income is irrelevant.

they are living in someone else's home where they receive personal care or rehabilitation. Apply to your local council for exemption.

## 3. Is someone who lives in the home exempt from paying poll tax or providing care to a severely disabled person?

Someone who is "severely mentally impaired" and living alone, or where the only other

residents are informal carers (other than the spouse or parent of the disabled person), will get 50 per cent off. A couple, one of whom has Alzheimer's disease, (who is an "invisible") will get 25 per cent off.

But couples, who may be living with a severely disabled relative in order to provide care, do not qualify for discounts.

## 4. Is the council taxpayer on a low income?

Council tax benefit will be similar to poll tax benefit, but with some important differences.

Maximum rebates will be 100 per cent, but will be reduced if certain other adults live in the home. These "non-dependant deductions" will not apply if the other people are on income support.

The rate at which rebates are withdrawn as income rises is increased from 15p to 20p in the pound.

Only the person liable for the tax can claim a rebate, which will be based on that person's and their heterosexual partner's joint income. Application forms available from your council.

## 5. Does the council taxpayer live with other people on low incomes?

The "second adult rebate" is meant to solve a problem that existed under the rating system.

A lone mother in low paid work lives with her son who is in his early 20s and has learning difficulties. She is the tenant and therefore has to pay the

council tax bill. She cannot get a rebate because her income is just too high. Her son is on income support and would get a 100 per cent rebate, but he cannot claim because he is not the taxpayer. She will not even get a discount.

The new rebate is meant to help people in this sort of circumstance. It is not available to couples, as they would not get discounts. Taxpayers, other than couples, who get neither a discount nor a rebate, can qualify if the other residents' combined incomes are less than £135 per week. They will get a 25 per cent, 15 per cent or 7.5 per cent reduction depending on the other residents' income.

The taxpayer's income is irrelevant. A millionaire could get a 25 per cent second adult rebate if she lived with her elderly mother who was on income support.

In cases where taxpayers qualify for the ordinary rebate in their own right but it is worth less than 30 per cent of the council tax bill, they might be better off getting the second adult rebate instead. Local councils are supposed to check which rebate will give the biggest reduction.

Free booklets, *Council Tax: a Guide*, and *Council Tax: Liability, Discounts and Exemptions*, in 12 languages, are available from Council Tax Publicity Material, PO Box 506, London SE99 7UY. For further advice, contact your local citizens' advice bureau, address and phone number in the telephone directory.

Pete Challis is research officer at the Local Government Information Unit.

## IN BRIEF

### Young deaf achievers

Helene Ryles, 22, (right) of Newcastle-under-Lyme, a teacher who is deaf-blind, has won this year's BT Young Deaf Achievers gold award. Silver went to Antony Rabin, 22, of Ilford, Essex, and bronze to Paul Hebblethwaite, 26, of Helperby, York.

In the employers section, the winners were Oce (UK), from Loughton, Essex, McDonalds restaurant at Redhill, Surrey, the Springfield Hospital Deaf Unit at Tooting Bec, London, and the University of Durham, for its pioneering support service for full-time deaf students.

### Nursery appeal

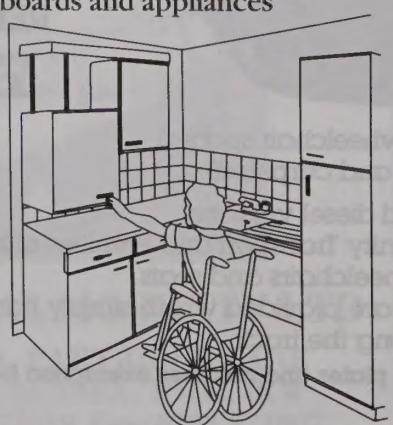
£500,000 is urgently needed to rebuild and develop the integrated Liverpool Early Years Centre at Netherley, run by the Spastics Society and Liverpool health, education and social services. If you can help, ring the centre on 051-488 0246.



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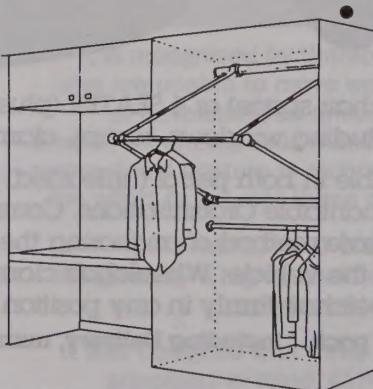
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Evelyn Glennie has taken the musical world by storm. Tim Russell talks to the percussionist who was awarded an OBE in the New Year honours list

Virtuoso percussionist Evelyn Glennie has had a memorable start to 1993.

In January she opened her own recording studios in Cambridge, set off on a concert tour of Japan and was awarded an OBE in the New Year honours list.

Evelyn, 27, who is profoundly deaf, is the world's only full-time solo percussionist.

She has made four records, performed in every corner of the globe and worked with the world's finest classical musicians.

She is looking forward to starting work on a new album, but believes nothing can beat the thrill of playing live.

"I love performing. It's a great feeling to be able to communicate with so many people."

Evelyn's charisma, enthusiasm and glamorous appearance have created a new interest in percussion among concert goers that never existed before.

"Percussionists have always had a bit of a raw deal. We've been unfairly regarded as the least important members of the orchestra. I am keen to change that."

Evelyn was brought up on a farm in rural Aberdeenshire with her elder brothers Roger and Colin. They all went to

# The pioneering percussionist

Cairnorrie Primary School and enjoyed helping their dad on the farm.

Although her parents were not particularly musical, Evelyn spent many hours practising on the family piano.

"I started to plonk away with two fingers as soon as I was able to climb on and off the stool by myself."

She soon made a name for herself, gaining the highest marks in the UK for a grade one music exam.

At the age of eight she started losing her hearing. "I realised something was wrong when I had difficulties listening to television."

When her deafness was finally diagnosed three years later, Evelyn's parents were told by specialists that she should go to a deaf school.

Evelyn refused. "I had no intention of doing anything that would cut me off from my music."

Instead, fitted with the most powerful hearing aids, she went to Ellon Academy, the local secondary school.

It was the first of many occasions when Evelyn showed a steely determination to succeed. She hid the aids behind long hair and decided not to tell her teachers or classmates about her disability. "They only found out I was deaf when I cut my hair."

Evelyn started playing percussion when she was 12. She was curious and liked the idea of playing a variety of different instruments.

She stopped using hearing

aids when she left school. They confused her during performances.

"The aids were not much use to me any more. Although they made everything louder they also distorted sound and I found I could use my other senses to 'hear' music."

"I've never been disappointed that I'm deaf. I feel that it has given me a sensitivity to music that I did not have when I could hear."

In 1982 Evelyn entered the Royal Academy of Music in London where she gained an honours degree and won the Queen's Commendation Award.

Soon she was inundated by requests for TV and magazine interviews. "I've always been happy to talk to the media so long as they stress my musicianship and not my deafness."

A contemporary of Evelyn's at the Academy remembers, "She caused a lot of excitement. You would see her walking down a corridor followed by a trail of TV cameras."

Her success isolated her. She was unhappy that some musicians would refuse to help her if she did not pick up a remark from the conductor.

But she refused to let their envy get her down. "I wanted to be strong and independent and not risk jeopardising my goals by worrying about other folks' opinions."

Her religious faith has helped to keep her going; she says she found strength in



RICHARD HAUGHTON / BWC

Evelyn Glennie has brought percussion on to centre stage

reading the Bible.

Since leaving the Academy Evelyn has worked with all the major orchestras and made history in 1989 when she gave the first ever solo percussion recital at the Proms.

Now she champions new talent and has founded an award given to composers of new percussion compositions.

She believes discrimination against deaf musicians is decreasing, but agrees more needs to be done to help deaf musicians break into the world of classical music.

Since 1990 she has been

patron of the Scottish Association for the Deaf. The Association's director, Morag Turner said: "Evelyn has proved a great inspiration for deaf people and played a vital role in increasing deaf awareness among hearing people."

Evelyn is happy to be a role model for others but does not feel it is her job to keep "waving the flag" for deaf people at every opportunity.

"The most vital thing is to encourage other deaf people to believe in their ability to overcome difficulties and go for what they want."

## The East Scotland Disability & Mobility Exhibition

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# Entering the weird world of Virtual Reality

David Brown of Nottingham University's Virtual Reality research team reports

Do you remember a film called *The Lawnmower Man*, in which a scientist uses Virtual Reality (VR) to transform a man with learning disabilities into a genius? Needless to say, the reality of VR for disabled people is far less fantastic than Hollywood imagines. But there are some projects going on which could bring real benefits.

VR uses computer-generated senses of vision, sound and touch to trick the brain into thinking it is somewhere else. "Virtual worlds" are created by the computer in which disabled people are able to defy reality and experience some of the things they may not be able to do in the real world, like play football or drive cars.

Research is also being done into VR "gloves" which can give people mobility in their hands where previously there was none.

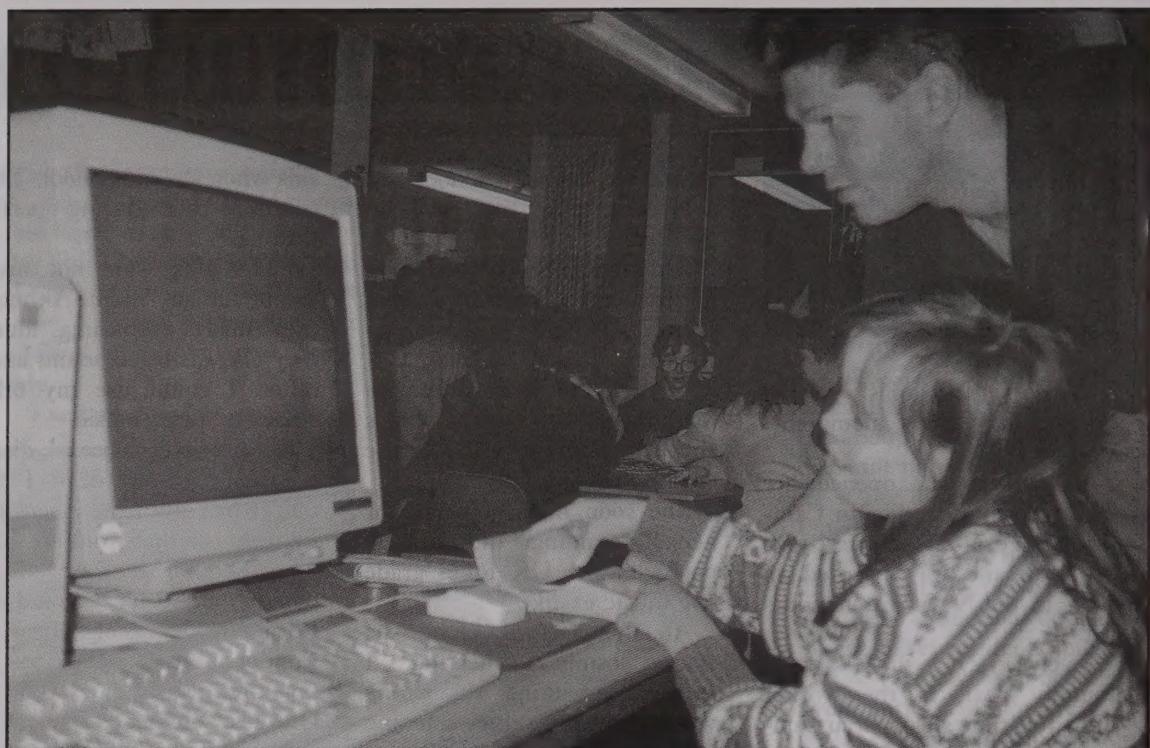
Despite these projects, the technology is still in its infancy and we still have a very long way to go.

In Britain, the Virtual Reality Applications Research Team (VIRART) at Nottingham University is using VR to encourage language development in children with severe learning disabilities at the Shepherd School in Nottingham.

Unlike the popular image of VR, we don't dress students in robot-like headsets and special gloves. This is called private or immersive VR, because you are "clothed" in virtuality and go into the experience alone.

As well as being expensive, some researchers have reported side effects such as sickness among people who have used immersive VR, and other cases where people have sudden flashbacks to the virtual world while driving a car, etc. Until these claims have been fully investigated, it would be unwise to offer immersive VR to young people with severe learning difficulties.

We use desktop VR, where you get a window into a virtual world via a standard personal computer and an accelerated



"I'm crashing!" cries Charlotte Louise Kent, 15, as David Brown watches her drive round the virtual world in a car

graphics card. To navigate around the virtual environment you use a "spaceball", a very sophisticated version of a computer mouse. If you want to go left in the virtual world, for example, you press the spaceball to the left in the real world.

Desktop VR gives the student the best of both worlds; the chance to interact with the teacher and the virtual world. You can also create more complex and exciting worlds on desktop than you can display on two small screens in a helmet.

#### Learning the VR way

Before we brought VR to Shepherd School, the Makaton symbol and sign system was taught using two dimensional picture cards. Teachers would show

children cards, explain what the symbol stood for and the pupils would repeat it back.

We fill virtual worlds full of three dimensional objects that bring the meaning of each symbol to life. Say, for example, we want to teach the Makaton sign and symbol for a car. Via the computer screen, the pupil enters the virtual world. As the student "walks" round, the Makaton symbol for the object is always on the screen, constantly reinforcing the link between the 3D object and the symbol. When they get to the car, the student clicks on it and two hands appear to do the sign for a car. The pupil imitates the sign and says the word.

Once four new symbols have been learnt, the student enters the "reward world", a kind of test. The four objects lie within this world. When one of the four symbols is flashed on the screen, the pupil has to go to the object it represents. If you get it right, two hands appear on screen giving the thumbs up sign and a new Makaton symbol to identify.

#### Results encouraging

An initial study using a test group of 16 pupils has produced very encouraging results, with three quarters of the pupils recognising most of the symbols in the reward world.

The Shepherd School takes pupils from age three to 19, so innovative teaching ideas are always welcome. Head teacher David Stewart says: "If we are working with people who are perhaps functioning at quite a limited level, but they're learning the same skill over a huge number of years, you've got to have a battery of ways of trying to make that interesting and stimulating.

"I would see VR as one of those tools, one of the ways of making life more interesting, making education more stimulating. I'd be very reluctant to say this will be the ultimate answer because no one thing ever can be."

VR is very popular with the students. We have also found

that the older and more able students like to help the younger ones, encouraging them to say and sign the words.

VIRART now wants to extend the programme so it can teach the meaning of all 350 Makaton symbols in their eight levels of increasing complexity. When that is done, we can compare traditional teaching methods with VR ones and see which is most effective.

We also hope to make the contexts as real as possible (for example, show cars in garages, windows in walls, etc), and make the objects age appropriate (not ask 19 year olds to identify teddy bears, for example) and install sound effects. The system also needs to be made more accessible to physically disabled people, by installing switches, etc.

#### What does it cost?

First year project costs were £45,000, paid by Nottingham University. It will take around 18-24 months to develop the software further. To help pay for this, the team has set up a friendly society of schools, charities, and other bodies (typical contribution is £2,000). When the project is complete, each contributing school will get all the software that has been developed.

Future generations will judge VR according to the uses it is put to. If these are primarily military uses - such as using robots to fight wars - then VR might be seen as harmful and wrong.

But if it is put to important uses in medicine, rehabilitation and education, VR may come to be seen as one of the most important tools to come out of the 20th Century.

Contact Dr David J Brown, VIRART, Department of Manufacturing Engineering, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD. Tel: (0602) 514040. *Glimpses of Heaven, Visions of Hell* is a new book on VR. By Barrie Sherman and Phil Judkins, it costs £12.99 and is published by Hodder and Stoughton.

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# If you don't act, who will?

Ty Goddard explains how to take matters into your own hands

the department instead.

Users faced a determined and cash-strapped council.

Once again, local people responded by forming a pressure/campaign group to argue for user choice and adequate adult services.

In spite of a 9,000 signature petition, two lobbies outside the town hall (including a nine hour vigil), sustained communication with local and national politicians and good press coverage, Sheffield City Council still maintained it knew best. Its only concession was to set up an independent review of the users' complaints, which many felt was just a cursory nod to the guiding principles in the charter.

#### People turn to the law

Different as they are, these examples show a crisis in the provision of *real* services for adults with disabilities.

While some are fortunate to have access to well-planned and relevant services, others are often saddled with services that are not what they need or want.

Increasingly, disabled people are turning to the law, incomplete as it is without anti-discrimination legislation, to protect and enhance services.

Such was the concern over the "hidden issue" of over-19 services that people felt a campaign or some political response was needed. They had to find a way of communicating with the local and national politicians who make decisions. An umbrella group, Action 19 Plus, was formed to deliver local training and campaigning advice nationally.

Tactics that had worked or failed needed to be shared. A series of information days, co-ordinated by organisations like Barnardo's, Kith and Kids, and the Spastics Society, are still going on (see below).

Action 19 Plus maintains that

there is enough legislation for people over 19 to obtain the services they need. While acting alone can be effective, the experience of many campaigners is that acting together increases the force of the argument and enables tasks, frustrations and joys to be shared.

#### How to get started

There is no magic formula for a successful campaign. But there are basic strategies and questions to ask yourselves that may give a better chance of victory.

\* Don't be afraid to question and debate what you and your group want to achieve

\* Is your aim realistic? Deciding what you want early can save you problems later

\* Is the local authority making decisions based on ignorance? Would its planning improve if you met representatives of social services or education?

\* It is important to understand what has happened before in your area and who else has campaigned

\* Take time to identify and learn about your local decision makers

\* Try to share the hard work and let others learn new skills. Ensure people are comfortable with their tasks, eg meeting the press

\* You can never have too many supporters. Look for them in the community; you will be surprised at the numbers

\* MPs and local councillors do take notice of the letters they receive. Also, write to your local newspaper. Your letter may get on the letters page

\* Don't be afraid to ask for a meeting with relevant council decision makers. Public meetings, publicised in advance, are a good way of bringing people together

\* Organise a publicity stunt - a stall in the local shopping arcade where you collect signatures for a petition, or an event with a local celebrity. Have fun communicating your message. Local press, radio and tv will be interested

\* Get to know how your local council works. Don't be put off: it is not complicated

\* Remember, coalitions of groups can become a powerful lobby for change

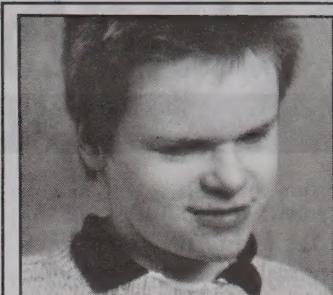
\* Use the Action 19 Plus banner, or host an information or training day.

A veteran campaigner said to me: "You can do nothing; or you can do something. I prefer to do something."

I agree with her!

Action 19 Plus days are being held on 13 February at Wakefield, 20 February in Bristol and 6 March in Cardiff. Send SAE for more information to Action 19 Plus, 41 Falmouth Gardens, Redbridge, Essex IG4 5JV.

Ty Goddard is campaigns coordinator at the Spastics Society.



Lee Barnes is nearly 19

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You see a name,  
I see a boy,  
You see a problem,  
I see his needs,  
You see an illness,  
I see his bright, shining  
spirit,  
You see his disabilities,  
Whilst I watch every day  
His endless struggle to be  
the same.  
I shout, shout out loud,  
I tell you of his  
achievements,  
You tell me he is crippled,  
I tell you of his dreams,  
You tell me there's no  
hope,  
I tell you of his endeavours,  
You tell me there's no cure,  
I tell you of our struggles  
and ask for help,  
And you dare to talk to me  
of financial constraints  
And turn us away!  
You see a liability,  
You see nothing,  
I see my son.

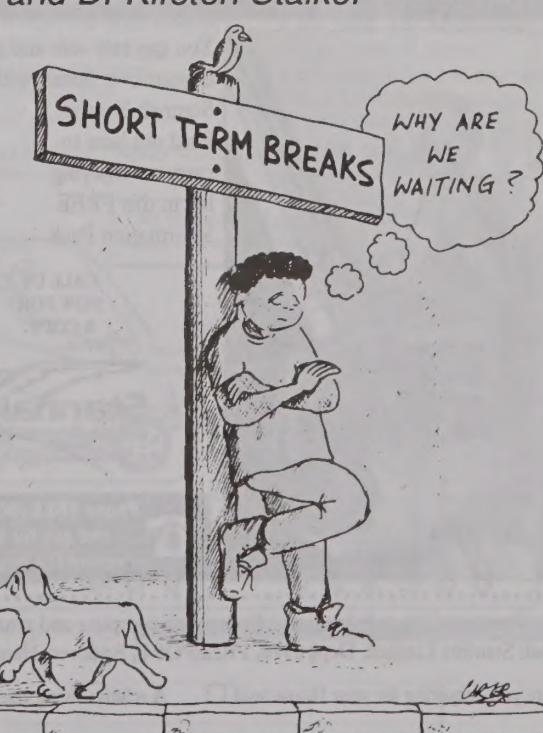
Karin Barnes

## Why are we Waiting?

Reducing Waiting Lists -  
Practical Guidance for Developing Short-term Breaks

Dr Carol Robinson and Dr Kirsten Stalker

Research has highlighted short-term breaks (respite care) as an important source of support for disabled people living in the community yet there is a serious shortfall in existing provision. Some groups of people who want short-term breaks are likely to remain on waiting-lists for long periods. This publication looks at the factors which tend to inhibit the growth of community links and those which stimulate service developments catering for a wider range of needs. It is intended as guidance for those running and managing support services as well as for people experiencing delays in receiving respite services.



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# Letters to the Editor

Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ

## My own community care

At the end of the year, I got a very real sense of "What will 1993 bring?" Will the changes in my life be as monumental as they were in July '92?

For seven and a half years I had lived alone struggling to exist with services from home care and district nurses.

With statutory services providing my community "care", my getting up and going to bed was determined by them. My once a week bath was dependent on there not being a bank holiday on that day.

I could have as many as nine different carers in my house each week. Having a social life of any kind when nurses might undress me in plastic pinnies and rubber gloves from 8.15 onwards was impossible.

The 1st of July became my independence day. After 14

months of stress and work I managed to get funding from Leicestershire social services (32 hours, £165 a week). This, with money from the Independent Living Fund (26 hours, £100 a week), allows me to employ my own personal facilitators (pfs).

How can I give you any idea of what this means to me? I can now do what most people take for granted. I can get up or go to bed at the time I want to, have a bath, even on bank holidays, eat and go to the toilet when I want. I can be in control of my own life.

I have three pfs, who I advertised for, interviewed and drew up contracts of employment for. I have the right to hire and fire. I no longer have to feel grateful, something disabled people learn very early in life.

The negative side is that I

have the administration costs. I cannot afford to pay holiday or sick pay. The assessment done by social services was cut by some 30 hours - this is still being reviewed.

It is called a "pilot scheme". I hope some of you who need to rely on services apply to Leicestershire - or try your own social services.

History has put us in a dependency mode and it is up to us to gain our empowerment.

Anne Pridmore  
Market Harborough, Leics

## Difference of opinion

An article relating to the Conference Centre in Harrogate appeared in your October issue. You quote a Mr Patrick Speechley-Lawes as saying there is no access to all floors by lifts.

There are two lifts, one of which Mr Speechley-Lawes rightly says goes from the car park to the ground floor foyer, and the second goes from the ground floor foyer to all other floors. If he had enquired from any member of my staff he

would have been escorted to that second lift.

Regarding Beth Gee's comment, I can assure you that the disabled toilets are of international standards, as are all the toilets in the facility.

M Holmes  
Assistant director  
Harrogate International Centre

## Putting the record straight

I refer to the letters from Mr G Acher, executive committee vice-chairman of Motability, and Joe Hennessy, director of support services, Muscular Dystrophy Group (DN, January).

First, may I put the record straight. The meeting scheduled for 14 September 1992 was instigated by myself and Richard Gutch, chief executive of Arthritis Care, not by Motability. It was requested because of the considerable problems I had encountered in renewing my lease hire car, due on 19 June. The replacement did not arrive until 4 August.

Even then my problems did not cease as I have to date

called the AA out five times.

The third time was on my journey to Motability at Harlow on 14 September via Arthritis Care in London. As a result, I arrived in London too late to continue the journey. On telephoning Ken Keen, director of Motability, we did indeed laugh at the irony of my situation and arranged to meet on 7 December.

This only shows the very considerable problems Motability has with its own internal communications. It is also one of their main external problems and the cause of much distress and frustration placed on people with disabilities when using Motability.

On a positive note, Richard Gutch and I did make good progress at our meeting. We discussed increasing consumer involvement in Motability and establishing an advisory group of consumers which would provide the advice, guidance and feedback that is lacking.

My sole aim and indeed that of Arthritis Care is to improve the quality of service on offer to people with arthritis. My call for an independent review (before I had heard of Ralph Irwin Brown's report) was born out of my frustrations.

Jean Ashcroft  
Vice-chair Arthritis Care  
Motability customer

**sic**

## From the DSS with love

"States from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are receiving advice from the British Government on how to go about setting up their own social security systems," trumpets a press release from the Department of Social Security.

Lucky old them. They will no doubt gaze in wonder at the efficient workings of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) system, and the stunning generosity of the Social Fund.

Presumably, this exchange of information will be two-way, so watch out. Those of you who make a spelling mistake on your DLA claim form could find yourself doing six months in a saltmine in Swindon.

## Fighting back

Disabled drivers in Axminster, Devon, have found a novel way to combat the age-old problem of non-disabled drivers taking their parking spaces by leaving notices saying "You have got my parking space. Would you like my disability?"

Can anyone beat that as a way of getting back at the parking pests? Answers please to DN, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Anyone advocating the use of machine guns or custard pies in the face will be disqualified.

## The Doings of Dan Nugent ("DN" to his friends) by Rigby



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# Leave the Albert Memorial standing

DN's motoring correspondent David Griffiths takes the Rover Metro CVT out for a memorable spin

"It has", said the BBC reporter on *Top Gear*, "an acceleration like the Albert Memorial". And few people would argue. For breathtakingly mundane performance from a standing start, nothing short of Del Boy's Reliant could rival the old four-speed AP transmission Metro Automatic. Attractive - without doubt. British - very. Popular - surprisingly. Great performance - definitely not.

Inheriting the four-speed automatic gearbox from the Allegro and Mini and sharing its oil with the rest of the 1.3 power unit did nothing to enhance its economy or reliability either.

#### Out with the old

What then of this "new" version? Gone is the old none-too-environmentally-friendly 1.3 power unit. In its place a bright, sparkling "K" series 1.4 petrol injection engine.

Turn the key and it springs to life, sharp, crisp and eager. The AP four-speed automatic transmission has been laid to rest at last. It has been replaced by Constantly Variable Transmission (CVT) offering stepless belt-drive and just two speeds, plus reverse.

Gone, too, is that ghastly angled driving position. The wheel now sits where the driver wants it, and the seats are just what a driver appreciates. A nice clean dashboard layout with good functional switchgear and a pleasant quality feel to the fabric trim completes the picture.

#### Quick off the mark

Externally, the new Metro looks little different from its predecessor, except for the rear hatch and a smoother front line. But select "drive", prod the accelerator and is there a difference! The power surges on, up goes the front and you're away like no memorial anywhere ... This new Metro fairly flies along with a bright sharp kick. It's not incredibly fast overall, but can cruise happily above the legal limit without showing undue strain.

Rover gives the car a maximum speed of 100 mph, but it would need a brave person to attempt that on anything other than a good straight road. The power/handling characteristics call for care, especially when accelerating sharply through corners or when turning right across oncoming traffic. Get it wrong and the wheel twitches and attempts to take over from the

driver: not a trait likely to endear it to the nervous.

The CVT transmission on the vehicle I tested offered some resemblance of "creep", which helped achieve smooth low-speed manoeuvring. But

thanks to the neatly fitted hand controls by Jim Doran of Coventry. These controls offer less knee-room intrusion than many similar units and look particularly good on this car.

hard acceleration, when the CVT could be heard whining away in protest.

#### Access problems

Access is very poor, with the deep footwell which

even if they manage to get into it.

Getting a wheelchair in behind the front seats could also prove difficult or impossible. I certainly could not do it.

This new 1.4L Metro 3-door comes with catalyser and a modicum of refinements for an asking price (retail) of £8,775, putting it on a level with a number of other small hatch backs. It looks good both inside and out.

But there are other vehicles with similar specifications which offer better access and better road manners for a similar outlay.

The test car developed what amounted to a dangerous fault during one fast run. It lost power suddenly on acceleration at just above 50 mph, causing the car to actually slow down. The impression given was that of a transmission problem rather than engine power-loss. Something to watch out for.

(Incidentally customers were faced with an estimated 20 week delivery delay "due to gearbox problems" in October 1992. Rover says the wait is now ten weeks.)

This new Metro may well have shaken off much of the old image, but just how much it has going for it remains to be seen.

Rover, tel: (0865) 746746.  
Jim Doran Controls, tel: (0203) 460833.



The new Rover Metro offers a better get away than its predecessor but little else

evidence of snatch and jerky performance in heavy traffic was apparent, as it is with many vehicles fitted with this type of final drive.

The brakes are smooth and positive with excellent "feel"

Comfort was excellent for a small car, so you should be able to take long journeys without suffering undue fatigue.

The noise level is only intrusive above 65 mph or on

bedevilled the earlier model remaining unchanged. Many people with lower limb problems (which means the majority of potential users) will find it impossible to get their feet out of the vehicle,



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DN2/93



Isabel Pollard loves and cares for her husband Bertram who became disabled 12 years ago (above). Isabel doesn't think her husband's disability changed their relationship too much. "If anything it brought us closer together." The couple, from London, have been together for 26 years. Isabel loves the anniversary surprises and "special little treats" Bertram arranges. When he came out of hospital, he gave her a big bunch of flowers to say thank you for being so loving and understanding. "I hope to carry on as long as possible as we are," says Isabel.

MAGGIE MURRAY/FORMAT



Kath Gillespie Sells from London (far left) loves Dilis Clare. "She's very loyal," says Kath. "That's the meaning of her name in Irish."

As well as a new infant son Taisce (pictured left with Dilis), the couple have two other children and have been together for 13 years. "We make a great team," Kath says.

"Dilis has a great sense of humour and is incredibly intelligent - I find that challenging and stimulating. I feel warmth when I think of her, especially if we've been separated."

# Who do you...

As St Valentine's Day draws near, DN presents a feature on love in the disabled world. In the mood, Catherine Frame and Alison Rowat ask some disabled people about their relationships.



Sarah Larkins, 5, from Cleckheaton in West Yorkshire, is one of the youngest members of the British Epilepsy Association (BEA).

With her mum Heather (picture above), dad and brother Damien, has done a lot of work raising money for the BEA and other people's awareness of the disability.

"She's very loving," says Heather. "She's quite ill at times, but she keeps going whatever."

As well as a fondness for playing with her dolls, Sarah helps her brother look after Snowy the rabbit and Squeaky the guinea pig.

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# You love?

Special on loving and living. To get you in the mood for Valentine's Day, we look at the people and carers who they love and why

Mary Curran and her husband Harry (pictured right in their younger days) will be celebrating their 50th anniversary this year.

The Curran's, from Newcastle upon Tyne, have three grown-up children and five grandchildren.

They liked to get out and about a lot, so at first it was difficult to adjust when Mary started using a wheelchair at the age of 40. But they made it through those times - "He was great," says Mary.

Harry has a terrific sense of humour, according to Mary. Once, when they were out to dinner, Mary was asked if she'd like more



trifle. "No," Harry piped up. "I have to push her home!"

Stephen Linden-Wyatt, 10, from Wellingborough, Northants (right), and Barbara Buist of Stafford (below) have eight legs and two tails in common - both called Trixie. But while Barbara's beloved is an Airedale terrier, Stephen's hails from Yorkshire.

Barbara and Trixie have been together now for seven years, and it doesn't seem a day too long. "I love her unpredictability," says Barbara. "She's an absolute clown: you can be taking her out and she'll stick her head up a lady's skirt!" Stephen and Trixie like to dance together (favourites include Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* and Christmas carols). "And she's a chocolate addict," says Stephen. "She steals them off the Christmas tree!"

Stephen lives with sister Shelley, seven, who is also disabled, mum Julie, dad Fred, and Tigger the cat.



Kevin Holmes and his wife Gwen from Redditch in Worcestershire have been married for only three months. "I love everything about her," says Kevin, "her looks, cooking, sense of humour, tolerance, patience and understanding - and she loves me. My special memory is seeing her walking down the aisle towards me on our wedding day. She looked so beautiful, and I couldn't believe how lucky I was." Unlike other newly-weds, Kevin and Gwen sometimes have to put up with other people's prejudices. "I get very fed up of people assuming that I'm Kevin's mother, just because he's disabled and his looks don't fit their idea of 'normal,'" says Gwen.



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# Contraception: what you need to know

**Dr Elphis Christopher**  
updates you on the current scene

Eighty out of 100 couples who have regular, unprotected intercourse will become pregnant in a year, 90 in two years. Although one in six couples experience infertility, for most people avoiding pregnancy is a major concern.

There is no ideal form of contraception. The various methods for men or women have their benefits and risks. Some are only available from a doctor; others can be bought at the chemist. Each couple must decide what suits them, and this can change with time, experience or circumstances.

There is also the risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease, particularly the HIV virus, which may lead to AIDS. If you have different sexual partners, a "belt and braces" approach may be best - an oral contraceptive pill to prevent pregnancy and a condom (male or female) to lessen the risk of transmitting the disease. If your partner is HIV positive, a condom should be used every time.

#### Where to get advice

You can go to your GP in surgery time or the GP may run a family planning clinic.

The district health authority may have a community family planning clinic or provide a home (domiciliary) visit by a doctor or specially trained



Richard Fairbrass, lead singer of Right Said Fred, helps to launch a new Family Planning Association leaflet on male and female condoms, available from chemists STEFANO CAGNONI

nurse - though these services have been cut in many areas.

Contraceptive supplies are available from the clinic or domiciliary service, but if you go to a doctor you must get them from a chemist.

Since fertility is an unknown quantity - the egg can stay alive for 24 hours and sperm can survive 3-4 days inside the womb or fallopian tubes - you need to find out if you are potentially fertile and, if so, whether a particular method is unsuitable for your disability and/or existing medication.

Here are some popular and/or effective methods.

#### Female contraception

\* **The female condom** (Femidom) is a disposable, one use only, loose-fitting sheath 15 cm long, made of thin, strong plastic that covers the whole of the vagina and external genitalia. It does not have to be fitted by a doctor or nurse. It is pre-lubricated (not with a spermicide) and has two rings: a flexible inner ring which is inserted into the vagina past the pubic bone and the outer ring which lies outside the vagina.

The Femidom does not interfere with sex and is a barrier to sexually transmitted disease and the HIV virus. Failure rate: thought to be two-15 per cent.

\* **Natural family planning** works on the principle that you avoid sex around the time an egg is released. To try and predict this needs motivation in both partners and expert teaching. Irregular period cycles and changes in the cervix can make it difficult to interpret the indicators. Failure rate: up to 25 per cent.

\* **The pill.** Hormonal contraception taken by mouth comes in two forms.

The combined pill (COC), with oestrogen and progestogen, inhibits egg formation. Taken properly, one every 24 hours for three weeks followed by one pill-free week, it is virtually 100 per cent effective. But some antibiotics and anti-epileptic drugs interfere with this effectiveness, as does diarrhoea and vomiting.

Minor side effects such as nausea or breakthrough bleeding usually settle after

two to three months. Major side effects are to do with an increase in blood clotting leading to thrombosis. The risk is small if the woman does not smoke, but greater for a woman who is immobile.

The pill protects against cancers of the ovary and endometrium (lining of the womb). There is an unresolved debate on the pill and breast cancer among women under 36 who start the pill under 25 and use it for more than four years. Studies so far imply that three in 1,000 users of the pill for more than four years would be under treatment for breast cancer at 36. Of these, two could not blame the pill and it is possible the third was predisposed to develop the disease at a later age.

Women taking the pill after 25 have no cause for concern. If they do not smoke, they can continue until they are 45. Smokers need to change method at 30. Future fertility is not affected.

The progestogen only pill (POP) is taken every day at the same time without any breaks, even at menstruation. It creates a mucus hostile to sperm in the cervix and is 98 per cent effective. Occasionally it stops egg formation. It is particularly suitable for smokers over 35 and diabetics. Few side effects.

\* **Depoprovera** is a progestogen only contraceptive injected every 12 weeks, which inhibits ovulation and makes the cervical mucus hostile to sperm. Almost 100 per cent effective.

It is reversible, though fertility may be delayed for six to 12 months. Periods are less heavy and painful and premenstrual tension reduced. Bleeding may be irregular and eventually periods may stop. Menstruation is not necessary for good health and its absence can be especially beneficial for women whose epilepsy is worse at period times. Other drugs do not interfere with it.

With no oestrogen present, thrombosis is less likely, so it could be used by women who are immobile. Like the pill, it protects against cancer of the ovary and endometrium and carries a similar risk of breast cancer.

Depoprovera has had a lot of adverse publicity, much of it unfounded.

\* **The Intrauterine Device (IUD)** is small, made of plastic and copper, and fitted in the womb. Newer devices can remain there for up to eight years. It works by impeding fertilisation and preventing implantation of the fertilised egg (not aborting it). Highly effective: 98-99 per cent.

It can be fitted at any time and should be checked

annually. Periods may become heavier and slightly painful. The risk of infection is small and related to sexual behaviour - the more partners, the greater the risk. Once removed, its contraceptive effects are reversed.

#### Male contraception

\* **The male condom** is a pre-lubricated sheath made of latex which fits over the penis. It should be put on before any genital contact and after intercourse the penis should be withdrawn before it becomes too soft, the base of the condom being held so there is no spillage into the vagina. It should be used once only. It reduces the risk of sexually transmitted disease and HIV. Failure rate: two-15 per cent.

#### In an emergency

Women who have had unprotected intercourse can use two methods, with medical advice. The hormonal, also called "morning after pill", involves taking two pills containing a high dose of oestrogen within 72 hours, followed by another two 12 hours later. Around 95 per cent success rate. Slightly more successful is an intrauterine device fitted within five days.

#### Sterilisation

Effective and permanent, but careful counselling is needed to forestall later regret since reversal cannot be guaranteed.

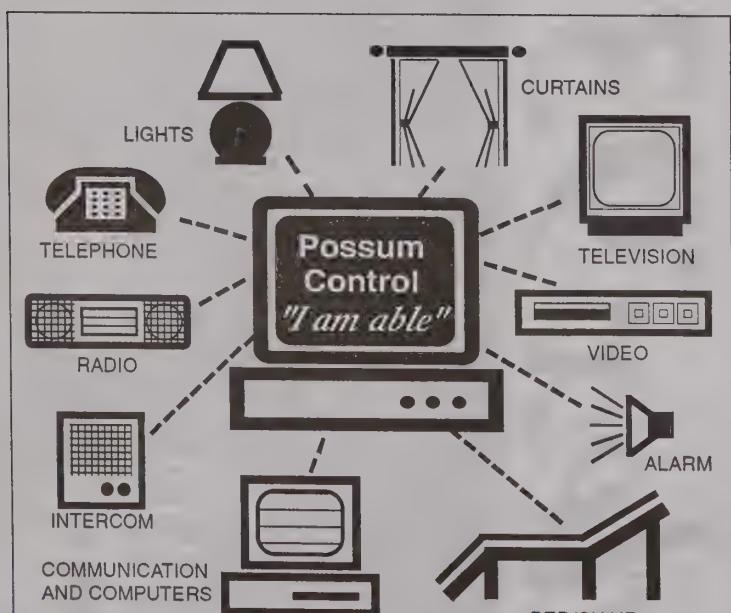
In female sterilisation, clips or rings are applied to the fallopian tubes. The operation is done under general anaesthetic on a day care basis and is effective at once. There are no menstrual problems.

Male sterilisation (vasectomy) is a simple operation done under local anaesthetic in about 10-15 minutes. The tube carrying the sperm from the testis to the penis is cut and tied on each side of the scrotum. It takes three months to achieve sterility and two further negative sperm counts are needed. There are no long term side effects.

While new methods are being developed, it is unlikely there will ever be the "perfect" contraceptive. Sex is "hot, natural, spontaneous". Contraception is "cold, premeditated and unromantic".

However, the unwanted consequences of sex without precautions can turn a romantic occasion into a nightmare. Better to be as safe as you can than sorry.

*Dr Elphis Christopher is senior clinical medical officer, Family Planning, Haringey Health Authority. If you have any queries, write to her c/o DN, 12 Park Crescent, London WIN 4EQ.*



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"WILL THIS PLANE NEVER ARRIVE?" thought Jennie as the airport crowds pushed and shoved around her. She had been waiting for Michael to arrive for three hours now. But she had been waiting for 10 years, so what did three more hours matter?

It had been a long time. It should have been a happy time, filled with a wedding, babies, a new home - all the stuff you see in the adverts. But it wasn't to be.

Michael hadn't seen the other car through the fog. There was a scream and bang, then it all went black.

When Jennie came home from the hospital, Michael had changed. He couldn't cope with people staring at Jennie's wheelchair, the pitying looks from strangers. Who the hell did they think they were looking at? *It wasn't his fault!*

Jennie was angry too. He should have been more careful, he was always so damned aggressive about everything.

Michael grew colder. He stopped talking. He stopped touching her. Everyone knew the wedding would have to be called off. "Poor Jennie" they all said.

She hadn't been surprised when Michael moved to Australia. His family were here, and they had often thought it would be a nice idea to go over once they were married. She wasn't surprised, but she hated him for going. He had betrayed her.

But life goes on, doesn't it? Jennie's family practically moved in with her. "Oh, don't try doing that dear, I'll get it", "Shall I get some shopping? You don't want to push yourself all round those shops, do you?"

#### Jennie is reborn

Slowly, Jennie rebuilt her life. She told the restaurant she wouldn't be coming back which saved them the embarrassment of sacking her. She had gone back to college, got some O Levels, A Levels, then a degree. She had got past the "But how can you be a teacher?" interrogations and completed her training.

"Poor Jennie" became Miss Jennie Robinson, BA Hons, teacher, flat and cat owner. Life was good. True, she had had to fight her way through her fair share of discrimination, put-downs and patronising swine, but she had kept her nerve and faced them down.

And now "he" was coming back. "I know I shouldn't have gone, Jennie," he wrote. "Maybe we can try again?" She cried when she read his letter. He had touched that part of her again.

Jennie started. Suddenly, he was beside her. Older, some new lines on his face. Nice clothes. Suntan. His smell. "Didn't you see me?" he said. He was laughing, nervous, embarrassed.

## A DN love story for Valentine's Day, by Krystle Glass



# A love apart

"I was miles away," said Jennie.

"So was I," said Michael. "But I'm back now."

#### Reality intrudes

It was strange to be dating Michael again. She had had several lovers after he had gone, of course. A few nerds, but lots of laughs.

They weren't really "dating" though. He came round for dinner, she went to his hotel. But it was nice. They had even made love for the first time (with the lights off).

"Why don't we go out to the theatre on Saturday?" asked Jennie.

"I'd like that," said Michael.

The big night arrived. Once out of the car, Jennie's heart sank. Steps. At least ten of them. Michael was flustered. "Let's forget it Jennie. We'll go back to the hotel and have a drink."

"The hell we will," said Jennie. "Have you bought the tickets yet?"

"No, I was going to get them on the door."

"Would you please ask the manager to come down then?"

said Jennie. "Now."

A sheepish Michael came back with an even more sheepish manager.

"Isn't my money good enough?" enquired Jennie.

"What do you mean madam?"

"You obviously don't want me to get into the theatre, so you can't need or don't want my money."

"It's a very old building madam. It would spoil the theatre's intrinsic wholeness if we plonked a ramp in the front."

"To hell with your intrinsic wholeness. What about my right to be treated with the same respect as your other patrons?"

A crowd had gathered. Michael looked as if he wanted to die.

"Come on Jennie! You're making a spectacle of yourself."

"No, Michael! I've done nothing to be ashamed of. I didn't put those steps there. It's not my 'fault' I'm disabled, I just am! And if you can't see that you can get lost as well!"

He walked away. She drove.

She was furious with him. What gave him the right to tell her how to run her life?

The letter was brief and to the point. "Michael, I know your plane ticket is valid until February 14th, so that gives you a week to make up your mind. I'm not your 'little Jennie' any more. I'm a disabled woman, my life is a little bit more complicated now."

"In an ideal world it shouldn't matter. But it's not an ideal world, and it never will be until people like you accept people like me. If you

stay, you have to accept me as I am."

#### A taxi calls

"WILL THIS DAY NEVER END?" thought Jennie as February the 14th dragged on. Nothing in the post from Michael. How could she let him do this to her again?

Then she heard it. A taxi. Oh please stop here. Please rush in and kiss me and tell me you'll stay.

A knock. It was him! She raced to the door and swung it open.

"Miss Jennie Robinson? These are for you."

She took the flowers as though they were a bouquet of nettles.

"I'm sorry," he had written. Tears stung her eyes. She felt like howling with pain.

As the messenger turned to walk away she saw Michael standing at the foot of the path.

"I thought I'd send in the advance troops to see if it was safe to proceed," he said.

"What are you doing?" cried Jennie.

"I know you've changed and I know I've got a lot to learn," Michael said. "But you have to understand that it's not easy for me either. I never expected life would be like this. I don't know what to do. But I do know one thing - I love you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. Can we take it from there?"

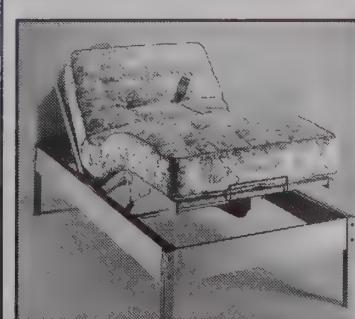
"Happy Valentine's day, Michael," said Jennie as she opened her arms to embrace him.

"Happy Valentine's day, Jen."

... The End

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DN293

# Sex aids and how to use them

What could sex aids do for you? Morgan Williams, director of the Association to Aid the Sexual and Personal Relationships of People with a Disability (SPOD) has some advice

Sex aids. These two words are so emotive, yet what do they mean? Simply, aids to sex. We don't have any difficulties if people who are having trouble hearing use a hearing aid, or those who need help eating and talking use false teeth. So why is the subject of sex aids such an emotive one?

Part of the reason is the popular image of sex aids as "dirty" or "kinky". Yet sex aids are simply aiding people to do things in their sex life that they can no longer easily do for themselves. (Perhaps a better description of them would be "devices to aid sexual activity", although that is a very cumbersome title.)

#### How to get sex aids

Even if you find the idea acceptable, acquiring a sex aid or device can be a problem. At the moment they are only available in sex shops or via mail order catalogues.

Always assuming the sex shop in your local high street is accessible to disabled people, many still find the idea of visiting one quite frightening. What potential embarrassments might lie behind that mysterious exterior?

The alternative is to send for a mail order catalogue. Until recently, SPOD obtained a supply of free catalogues for interested clients (they usually cost £5). But some people had

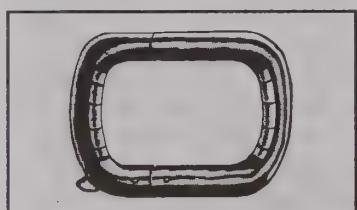
problems with the publication's rather explicit nature, so we stopped distribution. Now, we tell interested clients about the catalogue and let them decide whether to send for it.

#### What is available

Amongst the myriad of devices for sale there are several which have a prosthetic or therapeutic value for people with a disability.

An energising ring (below), made of ebonite, fits behind a man's penis and testicles. The ring is usually made to measure, so it fits comfortably and is unobtrusive when the man is clothed. The snug fit sets up a tiny charge of static electricity which you can't feel. This charge enlarges the minute blood vessels on which an erection depends.

The ring can nearly always



Energising ring

improve an erection which is otherwise incomplete, but it does depend on the man being able to obtain more than a reflex erection. It is also reassuring to know that the ring is individually made and in place, reducing the anxiety that is

often the cause of problems.

If you cannot get and maintain an erection, there are a range of artificial penises available (below). The imitation penis straps on to the man's body with an elastic harness. It may be solid or hollow, so that the flaccid penis can fit inside. A lubricating jelly should be applied to your partner before penetration.

If both partners can accept their use, the artificial penis



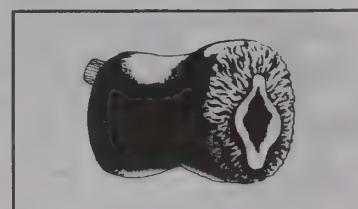
Artificial penis

and vagina (above right) can provide satisfaction to the non-disabled partner and allow the disabled partner to have sex in the usual way when it might otherwise be difficult or impossible. Many disabled people find this important, but such aids are not always acceptable to both partners.

#### Safe sex aids practice

A few words of warning about sex aids. They must never be used with violence, and full insertion of the substitute penis is not advisable. Artificial sex aids must be kept absolutely clean and not be used by other people. There is

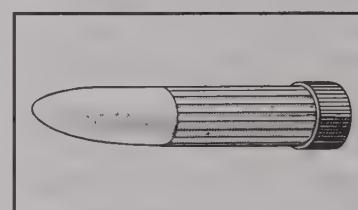
no evidence that sexually transmitted diseases or even HIV can be transmitted by



Artificial vagina

inanimate objects, but it is best not to take the risk.

People who do not have a partner, or those for whom sexual intercourse is not possible, may need a device to assist masturbation. A vibrator (below) can be used in these instances or to improve lovemaking. Most vibrators are hollow tubes containing batteries which produce the vibrations. The vibrations can be felt through the tube when it is placed against sexually sensitive parts of the body and create a tickling, thrilling, pleasant sensation. For those who are not happy with a vibrator which is penis shaped, there are circular massagers available from most chemists.



Vibrator

The body usually provides its own lubricating fluids to

**SEX FACTFILE**  
SPOD offers advice and counselling on sex and relationships to disabled people and professionals. Its telephone counselling service is available on: Tuesdays: 10.30am-1.30pm Wednesdays: 1.30pm-4.30pm Thursdays: 10.30am-1.30pm Just phone 071-607 8851 and ask to speak to the counsellor.

SPOD runs workshops for professionals around the country. It can also supply books and leaflets, including ones on sex aids and contraception. Prices start at 25p. For more information contact SPOD, 286 Camden Road, London N7 0BJ. Relate (formerly the Marriage Guidance Council) have produced *The Relate Guide to Sex in Loving Relationships*, a new book by Sarah Litvinoff. Published by Vermilion, £6.99. From bookshops or from Vermilion at Random Century House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA. Credit card hotline, tel: (0279) 427203.

make intercourse smooth and pleasant. Where these are lacking, and especially when sex aids are used, a water-based lubricating jelly such as KY can be enormously helpful.

If the cost of a sex aid is a problem - they are mostly in the £15-£30 bracket - it may be worth asking your doctor to prescribe one. In theory, a doctor may prescribe anything that they think will be therapeutic to the patient, provided the health authority will foot the bill.

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## FILM

## FOLKS

Can you believe that a movie starring the butch Tom Selleck (tv's *Magnum*), losing everything as he embarks on a comic journey into discovering Alzheimer's disease, could be remotely enjoyable? Surprisingly enough, *Folks* (PG) is.

Jon Aldridge (Tom Selleck) is a successful businessman and father. Then his mother, who he hasn't seen for years, is rushed into the hospital with gallstones. Reunion over, he finds he can't pay the hospital bill due to FBI investigations into his job, and that dad (Don Ameche) has "changed" as mum puts it.

It is the film's interest in charting how dad has "changed" that is fascinating. Dad is carefully portrayed exhibiting memory loss, then sudden memory recall, bouts of forgetfulness (leaving pans



Jon Aldridge (back row, middle) stands by his father Harry (with hat) and his folks

to boil over) and then spells of lucidity. He can remember the war as if it was yesterday. But he can't actually remember yesterday.

Added to this, we see how Jon Aldridge and his family respond to their "changed" father: Jon at first failing to recognise the signs, the family thinking they can cope with

dad's dementia in the privacy of their own home, Jon and sister Arlene finally consenting to help dad (and mum) end it all - unsuccessfully.

Of course this is all milked for laughs: this is comic cinema entertainment Hollywood-style. But at least the film-makers appear to have done some research into their

subject.

And there is little point in criticising the fact that a non-disabled actor plays dad. It would have been less than wise to cast a person with Alzheimer's in the Don Ameche role.

Andy Kimpton-Nye

Opens 5 February.

## EXHIBITION

## Look

Look is a powerful and colourful exhibition of artworks by young people with little or no sight. The work includes sculpture, pictures, two-dimensional wall plaques, print-making and photography.

There is plenty of background information, including a video showing some of the artists constructing their pieces. You can see how creating and exploring is often more important than the finished results (a refreshing angle that may not have occurred to viewers before).

The work's most outstanding quality, though, is its sheer expressiveness, especially in the sculptures. Facial contortions and bodily actions can be clearly felt with the fingertips, open mouths can be explored, limbs show tension and direction. The tender expression between the "Mother and Child" group is appealing beyond words.

The over-large hands and ears in some figures indicate the importance placed on these parts by their creators.

The pictures are no less enchanting, reflecting a personal statement in line and colour and a perception of a world we often fail to notice clearly.

Opening the exhibition, tv presenter and botanist David Bellamy said Look would help others to understand how young people with visual

## Look out for

Arts workshops at the Exeter and Devon Arts Centre. Till 28 April. Includes sessions on "making music, making magic". £3.50 a workshop. Facilitators free. Andy Boal, tel: (0392) 219741.

Free talks for visually impaired people at the Horniman Museum in London. 9 February, 9 March, 23 March. Subjects include ancient Egypt and toys and puppets. Tel: 081-699 1872, ext 124.

Got an arts event going on? Please send details to *DN*, 12 Park Crescent, London WIN 4EQ, six weeks before.

Impairments experience the world around them, probably in a deeper context than people with full use of all senses.

A book, *What Colour is the Wind?*, written by Sue Blagden and John Everett, was launched to coincide with the exhibition. It provides a satisfying addition to viewing and touching, and helps you understand what "looking" is all about.

Look is on tour around Britain and a continental tour is planned for 1994.

\* The highlight of the new Samsung Gallery of Korean Art in London's Victoria and Albert Museum is the 200-year-old pot which you may touch. It is set on a good level and is well-lit. An explanation of its features are available in raised print and in Braille, and there is a tactile diagram of one of the painted dragons depicted on the pot.

The pot is a welcome

## VIDEO

CS: closed subtitles, S: subtitles, NS: no subtitles

1. **UNIVERSAL SOLDIER** (Guild) Brawling beef from musclemen Van Damme and Lundgren. (CS)

2. **THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE** (Buena Vista/Hollywood) Thrilling stuff, but trash portrayal of asthma. (CS)

3. **BASIC INSTINCT** (Guild) A very tiresome tale

of 101 things to do with an ice-pick. (CS)

4. **BATMAN RETURNS** (Warner) Looks great, but slumps by bringing out the old cliché linking disability with evil. (CS)

5. **WAYNE'S WORLD** (CIC) Surprise smash-hit "yoof" comedy without being funny really. (NS)

Andy Kimpton-Nye

Chart courtesy of MRIB

add to the enjoyment of a gallery visit.

Gioya Steinke

Glasgow School of Art, 8-29 February, then round the country. Contact John Everett, tel: (0432) 265725.

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## TV

Timeshift (ITV, 3 January) is a half-hour, weekly digest of the previous seven days' output from GMTV, which replaced TV-am on 1 January. Although it carries on-screen subtitles throughout the 30 minutes, it only sign language interprets the studio introductions to the extracts. So a slot mainly intended for deaf people is only partially accessible.



Also, it seems unlikely that any part of this programme will be a national news review, something badly needed by deaf people. Still, GMTV deserves merit points for serving its deaf audience at all, even if it is at 6am.

Stereotypes of disability were reinforced in the three programmes in the *Hearts of Gold* series (BBC1, from 4 December 1992). The mother of a large family with a disabled husband (who nominated her) and a disabled son, was given an award simply for "coping". Yet she seemed a very matter of fact person who took everything in her stride. She seemed not so much surprised at being approached by the likes of Esther Rantzen and Mike Smith, as amazed that she should be considered exceptional.

Deaf grandparents of a large family were nominated. Part of the reason quoted was their ability to "integrate", ie they always spoke, rather than used sign language. I suspect this is a virtue with which not everyone would agree.

Telethon raised its head again in *Telethon Update* (ITV, 27 Dec '92), a short report back. Among those receiving money were Strathcona Theatre Company and Changing Faces. Surely, not many of the Telethon opponents would disagree with this choice of recipients?

The final *Sign On* of the present series (C4, 2 Jan) asked BBC, ITV and Channel 4 about the possibility of a signed, national news round-up for deaf people. All said no, pleading, among other things, "limited resources". What an outrage that people can be denied access to such fundamental information.

Especially shocking was Channel 4's flat rejection. Given this, and the fact that in the first three months of this year, Channel 4's deaf/disability output will be practically nil, it's hard to avoid a cynical conclusion: now that C4 is selling its own advertising, our priorities may no longer be their's.

Chris Davies

# Share Your Problems

with Ann Darnbrough

## Birds do it, bees do it ... but do disabled people?



Love, sex and romance all rolled into one; isn't that what Valentine's Day is all about? Mind you, I was disappointed to find out that St Valentine was no great shakes in the romantic stakes. Contrary to popular notions, he didn't rush round posting sheets of papyrus proclaiming his love to the Roman ladies of his choice (or if he did, he kept it secret).

My encyclopaedia says the custom of sending Valentines probably had its origin in "a heathen practice connected with the worship of Juno Februalis at the Lupercalia". (Who's JF at the L? Don't ask me!)

Another theory has it that St Valentine's day came about because birds started mating on 14 February, obviously inspiring the song lines "Birds do it, bees do it, even educated fleas do it ... let's do it, let's fall in love".

### Love me for myself

To be serious, the issue for disabled people is one of image. So, all right, some of us look a bit different or have parts of our bodies that don't

work so well - does that matter? Should that prevent us having sexual relationships?

Celia (not her real name) expresses so clearly the view that more and more disabled people hold: "love me for myself and accept all of me".

After an accident, Celia was very self-conscious about her changed physical abilities. Throughout the healing process, her boyfriend had been supportive.

"However," wrote Celia, "after the bones had settled, so to speak, and he knew that it was only my mind preventing us from returning to a full sexual relationship, his attitude changed.

"I desperately needed to regain my confidence within a new body. I needed to not only learn to feel attractive and sexy again, but I needed to do it within the context of assimilating my disability into how I thought about myself and my sexuality. I needed to be allowed to feel sexy and disabled at the same time, whereas he thought if we both just ignored the scars and the limitations we could pretend

everything was okay. He wanted to go to bed with my body but not my disability. Our relationship suffered considerably and we eventually parted."

### Love finds a way

"Over the last few years," continued Celia, "I have worked through my feelings towards myself and my body, and have eventually dispelled the feelings of inadequacy my previous boyfriend had bestowed on me.

"I am again sexually active, but this time I feel good about myself and can enjoy sex again. I don't try to apologise for my slightly less than perfect body to a new partner. I always talk about my disability, my scars and what I can and can't do. They either accept the full mind and body package as one, or get told where they can put their ardour.

"I would even suggest that sex within a framework of open discussion about how we really feel about our bodies, and without the stereotyped expectations that we all have to look like Michelle Pfeiffer, is even better than before.

"The media suggest we, as people with disabilities, should feel ashamed of our imperfections, and the kindest thing for someone without a disability to do to someone in bed is to say it doesn't matter. My disability *does* matter to me, it's part of me, just as much as my sexual organs, and the way my current partner acknowledges that means that I don't have to accept this society's patronising sexual

pigeon-holing of my own experience. It also means I've ended up with someone who's proved his sensitivity and maturity from the start.

"Disabled people can be sexy and desirable, and learning that has been a positive and enriching lesson for me as well as giving me a sexual confidence I don't think I ever had before."

Anita has not had such a positive experience. "What I have always found difficult is the rejection of my body/disability rather than my personality. It has happened more times than I care to remember, but every time I

### A UNIQUE SERVICE!

Lin Berwick, *DN*'s telephone counsellor, herself disabled, can give other disabled people and their carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems. Lin is a fully accredited Methodist local preacher and a qualified psychotherapeutic counsellor. Talk to her on Monday afternoons, 1pm-5pm and Thursdays 6pm-10pm. Her telephone number is (0708) 477582. *DN*'s helpline is sponsored by The Wellcome Foundation Limited.

give in without a fight, and every time it hurts like hell. Subconsciously I feel that I am unworthy of that sort of attention, which manifests itself with me running away rather than demanding my rights to be treated with respect.

"What I can't decide is whether my reactions are a result of conditioning and the cumulative effect of people's ignorance and spite, or because

I am just a pathetic creature who isn't even capable of sticking up for myself. I wanted four children and a husband. Now I think I'll be lucky to have intercourse before the menopause sets in.

"As you can see, the subject of sex stirs up emotions in me, but the other aspects of my life are good. I live alone in my own house, I am professionally qualified and good at my job, and I have loads of friends and a warm family. Is that because I am able to exercise more power over the decisions in those areas of my life? Whatever the answer, the thing I miss most from not having a 'relationship' is the affection, not the sexual side of things. Do other women agree?"

### It's never too late

Sybil has found a new love. "I recently met a very nice chap who accepted me with my disabilities of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis and angina. Pete is a fit man with no health problems. He treats me with great respect and care for me well. There are times when I wonder why he accepted me as I am, and his answers fill me with delight. Pete has given me a future to look forward to. In spite of my disabilities and my age of 51 years he proposed to me."

Most of the (very welcome) letters I get on sex are from men, so I was particularly pleased to hear from Celia, Anita and Sybil. Please keep writing to me at *Disability Now*, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. If you like, you could address the letter to *Kisability Now*, as the Grauniad (sorry, *The Guardian* did! (*DN*, December)

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# On my lonesome

There can't be many wives who would admit to misplacing their husband. But mine's one.

One day, my wife asked if I fancied a "trundle" round the shops. The first one was on the opposite side of a busy road. "Just leave me here for five minutes while you make your first call, then come back and collect me," I volunteered.

Sitting as comfortably as one can in a wheelchair, I relaxed in the sun's warmth.

Ten minutes passed. The store she had gone to must be busy. Another ten minutes. She's bumped into someone and is having a natter.

Five minutes later, a pleasant young woman with a pram and an elderly Labrador appeared.

"Will you be here for another ten minutes or so?"

"The way things are going I could well be here for the next ten days," I said. Yes, I would keep an eye on her offspring, the pram and the dog.

"It seems to take ages these days when you come into town," she said.

"I'm beginning to know the feeling," I quipped.

A short while later, an elderly country woman leaned her sit-up-and-beg bicycle against the wall. "Are you going to be here for the next few minutes?"

"More than likely!" I said with a degree of confidence I would not have felt three-quarters of an hour earlier. From being a pram/child/dog minder I was transformed into a bike-watcher.

"You can't trust anyone these days," she explained darkly. If not directly a compliment to my honesty, her comment indicated perhaps that she did not expect me to leap from my wheelchair onto the saddle of her ancient bicycle and ride off with it.

At last, my wife arrived with the news that, having bought items in at least three shops and in the market, it was only when she left the chemists that she realised I wasn't with her. "I couldn't for the life of me remember where I left you. I hope you haven't been bored being kept waiting all this time."

"Bored?" I said. "I've been having the time of my life."

"There's no call for sarcasm."

But to her everlasting credit, she's still an avid listener each time I tell anyone the story, even to the point of prompting me should I forget to include the incident with the charity collection volunteer who took up a position close by my side for a time. But that's another story ...

Denis Taylor

Win a £10 prize

## Can you create-a-caption?

Disabled and non-disabled dancers got together to strut their funky stuff as part of Watford Art Links Festival last year. What could these two ladies be saying as they disco round the dance floor? Answers please by 11 February to *Disability Now*, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.



### ... NEWS QUIZ ... NEWS QUIZ ... NEWS QUIZ

Answers page 23

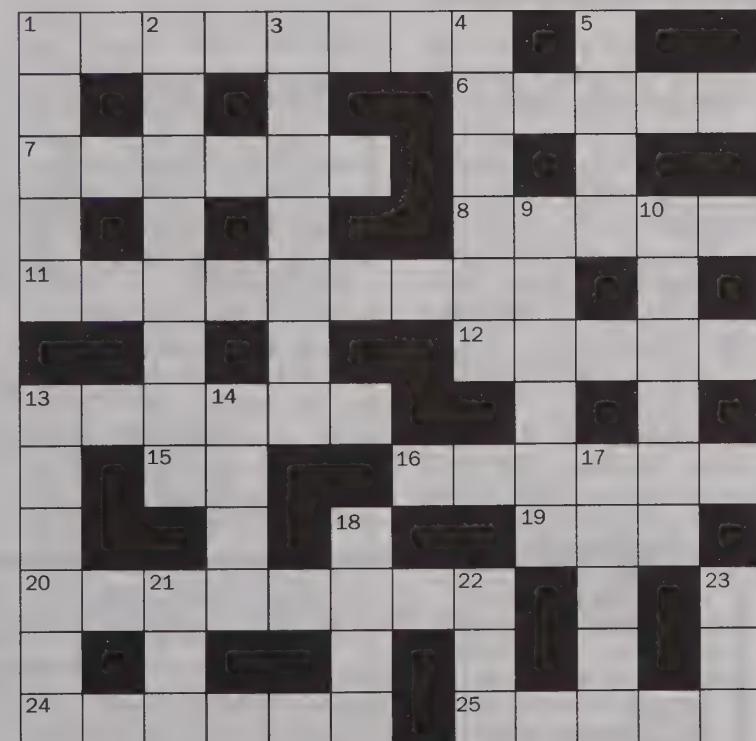
- According to the National Deaf Children's Society, what proportion of deaf children's teachers were not properly qualified?
- Which cricketer's marriage failed?
- Which deaf musician got a New Year honours list?
- Who was investigated by police for possibly living illegally in Switzerland?

- Why were a Chicago couple charged with child cruelty?
- Which agony aunt is having her biography published?
- What is Operation Restore Hope?
- Where were the first multi-party elections for 26 years?
- Which radio station stopped broadcasting in English?
- Which US state banned gay anti-discrimination laws?

### DN's crossword

Answers page 23

COMPILED BY REBECCA REYNOLDS



#### ACROSS

- Animal helper (5,3)
- Shade of 1 down (5)
- Salad vegetable (6)
- Mushrooms, for example (5)
- The emperor who had — (2,7)
- Monarch (5)
- Take revenge on (6)
- Cheek — cheek (2)
- Tool or emotional shock (6)
- Type of deer (3)
- Clerks (8)
- From there (6)
- Customer (5)

#### DOWN

- Played on by 4 down (5)
- Rude (8)
- Jealous (7)
- Nick Faldo, for example (6)
- Notice (4)
- Moneylender (6)
- Mediterranean country (6)
- Container for fruit (6)
- Very small Greek letter? (4)
- Friend of Big Ears (5)
- Play a tune (4)
- Equipment used by 4 down (3)
- Weep (3)
- Term used by 4 down (3)

#### January winner

The £10 goes to Mrs M McCormick from Brighton. As the boys make models, Mario in the middle says: "NOW do you believe me they put superglue in the mix?"



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Right, you've got a hot date tonight and the house is a mess. You'd been looking forward to the romantic meal *à deux* for weeks and then when the day finally arrived it slipped your mind.

Take a tip from *DN* reader Martin O'Connor. He has MS and ME and finds he is very forgetful. He says: "I have lost count of the number of appointments, dates with friends and other engagements I have missed due to my poor memory."



But all this was before he discovered the Casio DBC-62 Gents LCD Data Watch, £24.95 from Argos. The watch has a tiny keyboard and screen on its face. You can put in appointments, telephone num-

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## CHECKOUT

up to two weeks in advance. On the day and time of the appointment an alarm sounds.

Mr O'Connor enters the time of the appointment an hour ahead, giving him time to get there.

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If you want to really pamper yourself before (or after!) your date arrives, the Bodykiss Invigorating Bath Sponge could be for you. Made of soft, stretchy, mesh material it is gently abrasive and mildly invigorating. £4.95 (inc VAT). For your local stockist tel: 071-3221.

Arranging a date over the phone or chatting to friends could be made easier with the Portable Telephone Amplifier from Sound Advantage. It is strapped to the handset and amplifies the caller's voice. It also produces a loop signal which can be received by a hearing aid. £31.96 (inc VAT and p&p). Tel: (0733) 361199, minicom: (0733) 238020.

If you are invited out on your first date, the Shoprider Sunrunner Scooter could be what you need. It has a very tight turning circle so it is good for smaller places in restaurants or at your date's

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The Diner Trolley from Keep Able (above) is a table and a steady walking aid in one. So if you want to serve that romantic meal with ease this could be for you. £76.25 (ex VAT). Tel: (0933) 679426.

## INFO

*Heard it Through the Grapevine*, a report by the Oxford Disability Information Project, looks at the use of GPs' surgeries, supermarkets, village shops and so on as channels for disseminating information to people with disabilities. Free from Alison Clarke, Manager, ODIP, Oxford RHA, Old Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 7LF, tel: (0865) 226609.

The Barclays Age Resource Action Scheme will give grants of between £500-£2,000

**Disability Awareness Training Associates.** Presentation and workshop to introduce this newly formed group of people with learning difficulties who offer disability awareness training. 11 February at Chamberlain House, Yew Tree Road, Moseley, Birmingham. £5. For further details contact Viv Eden, tel: 021-440 0316.

**Getting Money from Europe**, a one day workshop. 16 February in London. £55. For more information contact Jonathan Hardy, Events Administrator, Directory of Social Change, Radius Works, Back Lane, London NW3 1HL, tel: 071-435 8171.

**Goal Planning**, a one day workshop for teachers, care staff and professionals. 22 February in Oxfordshire. £43. Further details from Castle Priory, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 OHE, tel: (0491) 37551.

**Royal National Institute for the Blind's Leisure Resource Day**. 23 February in London. Free. Further information from Gill Levy, RNIB, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA, tel: 071-388 1266 ext 2449.

**Design Team Training**, a two day training course for occupational therapists, planners and designers. 25-26 February in London. Contact Victoria Waddington, All Clear Designs, 107 The Chandlery, 50 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7QY, tel: 071-721 7480.

**Human Rights, Disabled People and Anti-Discrimination Legislation**. 27 February in Bristol. A free conference for disabled people from the South West. Contact Claire King, Action on Disability and Development, 23 Lower Keyford, Frome, Somerset BA11 4AP, tel: (0373) 473064.

**Managing Special Education Needs**, a conference. 2nd March in central London. Costs on a sliding scale £30-£80. For more details contact Conference Department, The Royal Society of Health, 38A St George's Drive, London SW1V 4BH, tel: 071-630 0121.

to innovative new projects devised and carried out by groups with a significant number of people aged over 50. In 1993, grants will go to projects promoting good health or offering care. Closing date: 1 March 1993. More information and application forms from Joanna Ridley, Grants Officer, Age Concern England, 1268 London Road, London SW16 4ER, tel: 081-679 8000.

**How to Choose a Powered Vehicle**, an information leaflet from Banstead Mobility Centre, for disabled and elderly people considering buying an electric wheelchair, buggy or scooter. Free from Banstead

Mobility Centre, Damson Way, Orchard Hill, Queen Mary's Avenue, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 4NR, tel: 081-770 1151.

## MOVES



**Jim Greal (left)** succeeds **Winfred Tumim** as chairman of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People. **Simon Hebditch** is acting director of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations while **Judy Weleminsky** takes maternity leave. **Madeline Poulton** is Thames Water Utilities' first recreation manager.

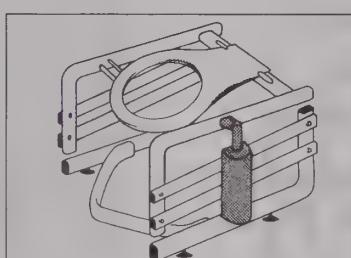
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For further information and application forms, please contact: The Secretary, Rosehill Rehabilitation Unit, Lower Warberry Road, Torquay TQ1 3HD, tel: (0803) 291909.

CLOSING DATE: Monday 15th February 1993.

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You will need outreach/community work skills, experience of project development and an understanding of the issues affecting young disabled people.

Salary: \* until April 1st 1993: NJC Scale 6 £14,106  
(pro rata 25 hours £10,076)  
\* after April 1st 1993: Scale 6 @ 35 hours £14,106

Closing date for applications: Friday 12th February.

Interview date: Monday 22nd February.

Please send for information, stating if braille, large print or tape is required to: GMCDP, Unit 33, Cariocca Business Park, 2 Hellidon Close, Ardwick, Manchester, M12 4AH.  
ONLY DISABLED PEOPLE NEED APPLY. THIS POST IS AVAILABLE FOR JOB SHARE.



### London's Information and Advice Service for Disabled People On Arts and Entertainment

### ARTSLINE

requires a Disabled Asian Outreach Worker and a Deaf Asian Outreach Worker.

For each post the worker will undertake outreach work, with Asian Disabled People and Asian Deaf People in London, to ascertain their needs in respect of arts, entertainment and cultural activities.

For each post: salary: £12,883 for a 5 day week, on a fixed term contract.

Period: 10 months.

Job description and application form (in print and tape) available from: ARTSLINE, 5 Crowndale Road, London NW1 1TU. Tel: 071-388 2227 (voice and minicom). Fax: 071-383 2653.

Closing date for applications: 26 February 1993

ARTSLINE is an Equal Opportunities Employer. Only Disabled People need apply. The workspace is fully wheelchair accessible.

## OFFERING A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES

## WE CAN OFFER A WIDE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES

We provide Waltham Forest's multi-cultural community with a wide range of essential services. That means we have a wide range of job opportunities to offer.

Whatever your background, skills, or level of experience, we're bound to have a position to suit you. You don't have to be straight out of school or college with a string of qualifications either.

We regularly have vacancies of all types at all levels - office, craft and manual, and professional.

You will find our job advertisements in the local papers, national press and in various trade and professional journals. Information on our vacancies is displayed at local Job Centres, and details are also circulated to community groups within the Borough.

Contact the Recruitment Officer on 081 527 5544 for our Job List, which is updated each week. Or you can pick up a copy from the Town Hall, Forest Road, London E17 4JF, or from other public offices and libraries. The Job List is also available on tape, upon request.



For a copy of the Job List return the coupon to The Recruitment Officer, Personnel Department, Town Hall, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4JF.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
DN \_\_\_\_\_

## FIND-A-FRIEND

For Find A Friend ads please send a cheque or postal order for £3 payable to *Disability Now* with your ad.

I AM A LADY with cp and partially deaf. Aged 40. I live in Salisbury, Wiltshire. I would like male penfriends either disabled or able-bodied. Must be genuine, please. Interested in sign language (learning at present), dining out, places of interest and animals. Box No. 509.

GAY PARAPLEGIC GUY, in wheelchair. Keen on riding three and four-wheel motor cycles, adaptation of these machines and use of full leather and rubber riding gear for different disabilities. Box No. 510.

REBECCA, 18 (AB) will write to anyone aged 15-30 who needs a pal. I like PHAB social club, cinemas and discos. I will try to write to everyone. Box No. 511.

PROFESSIONAL WOMAN, 42, divorced, disabled. I am a sensitive, humorous, independent, caring, non-smoker and have varied interests. I am seeking a man for friendship and perhaps romance. Box No. 512.

LONDON. Charming young widow wants a caring and romantic young man between the ages of 50-60 with a car for outings and friendship. Box No. 513.

MALE 33, GRADUATE, slightly disabled due to arthritis. Has car, wishes to meet female, preferably also slightly disabled or able bodied, living in the South East. For friendship, possibly leading to relationship. Box No. 514.

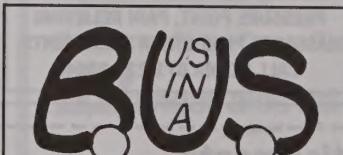
YOUNG MALE, 25, wheelchair user with cp. Wants to meet someone fun-loving and outgoing, possibly able-bodied, aged 18-27, possibly from County Durham. Box No. 515.

MY NAME IS TOM, I am 27 years old and live in Norfolk. I enjoy most sport and computer games. I am looking for a penpal, male or female. Box No. 516.

MALE, 46, wears calliper but can get around okay. Seeks male friend, hopefully leading to a special friendship. South Coast area preferred. I am quite good looking, solvent and want safe enjoyment and excitement. Interests music, eating out, motor-caravanning. Disabled/able-bodied aged 25-46. Send: details, photo and phone no. Box No. 517.

To reply to a Find-A-Friend indicate the Box Number and mark the envelope *Private and Confidential*. If you do not it will be opened. Send to DN, address on page 2.

Candoco Dance Company are looking for a disabled female (wheelchair user) with experience or who is interested in training in the performing arts, to undertake and eventually perform with the company. The successful applicant would need to be able to attend weekly classes in London. The company tour throughout the UK. Auditions at the end of March. For further information please contact: Adam Benjamin, 19 Briston Grove, London N8 9EX, tel: 081-340 9899.



PROJECT WORKER: 3 year contract  
£13,236-£15,669 (NJC SCP 24-29)

US in a BUS is an independent project (seeking charitable status) which provides leisure activities for people with profound learning disabilities living in hospitals.

If you are an enthusiastic, energetic and imaginative person who enjoys responsibility and hard work this job could be for you.

For more information phone Marianne Hecker or Janet Gurney on (0737) 768511 ext 8260 (24hr answerphone) or write to US in a BUS, c/o The Royal Earlswood Hospital, Brighton Road, Redhill RH1 6JL.

Closing date for applications: 12 February.



## SPECIAL NEEDS NURSERY OFFICER

is required to work 20 hours per week from 10am until 3pm per day.

The worker should have a relevant qualification such as N.N.E.B. or Montessori and should have at least two years experience of working with children aged 0-5 years.

This worker will be required to work with specific individual needs so a knowledge of, or experience of working with children with special needs would be desirable. The worker needs to be prepared to work within a strong staff team, be flexible and have the ability to communicate with parents and outside agencies.

The worker should be able to promote the nursery's policy opposing all forms of discrimination.

Rate of pay: £8.41 per hour.

Closing date: Friday 19th February 1993

To: Lea View Community Nursery, Lea View House, Springfield, Upper Clapton E5.  
Tel: 081-806 9012.

## CLAIMS ASSESSMENT IN A HEALTH INSURANCE ENVIRONMENT

c.£15k + profit share & attractive benefits • Dorking

UNUM Limited is the company which pioneered long term disability insurance, and we are the UK's market leader.

Claims from both customers direct or their brokers, are handled centrally at our Dorking Head Office by our specialist Claims Assessors. This small team enjoys considerable autonomy in evaluating the appropriate levels of benefits, and in doing so they need to draw on a wide range of evidence, information and opinion, both internally and externally.

To further strengthen this team, we are looking for a professional with a proven track record in either health related claims assessment or underwriting. In your career to date, you will have developed sound analytical skills, a logical approach and an understanding of medical conditions. You also will have demonstrated that you can liaise effectively at all levels, and are now ready for the career opportunities and variety that only an expanding company with a history of innovation can offer.

The salary, which will be based on your experience and qualifications, is supported by some very worthwhile benefits including a mortgage subsidy, profit share, non-contributory pension, free lunches in our superb restaurant, ample car parking, transport to and from Dorking, an active sports and social scene and an on-site fitness and medical centre.

If we have described you, send details of your career to date, together with your current salary and a daytime telephone number, to: Heather Harris, Personnel Officer, UNUM Limited, Milton Court, Dorking, Surrey, RH4 3LZ. Tel: 0306 887766.



## PAPWORTH GROUP

where people matter

### OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST TO MANAGE

Our Vocational Assessment and Evaluation Centre specialising in the vocational assessment of people with disabilities.

The Centre which has been operating for 3 years advises clients on the most appropriate employment opportunities and provide guidance to employers and trainers on how to best utilise the skills and abilities of those who have been assessed.

Applicants who should have a Psychology degree, will ideally have a post graduate qualification in Occupational Psychology and must have at least 3 years relevant experience in using and interpreting a wide range of psychometric tests and in providing occupational guidance and counselling.

### COMPUTER SERVICES MANAGER TO MANAGE

A team providing internal computer services, external business services and a small training school training people with disabilities, in programming and related skills.

Programming systems used are Windows, C++, Clipper, ORACLE and RPG400.

Applicants, who will need to be good communicators, should have project management and business development skills along with experience in the development of systems - through analysis, design, programming and implementation.

If you consider that you have the necessary experience and qualifications to take on either of these unique opportunities, please forward your CV with a covering letter stating why you think so, to:

The Personnel & Training Manager, Papworth Group, Papworth Everard, Cambridge CB3 8RG. Telephone Huntingdon (0480) 830345.

The Papworth Group is an equal opportunities employer and particularly welcomes applications from people with disabilities.



## PAPWORTH GROUP

deadlines for March issue: booking by 12 February, camera ready artwork/copy by 16 February.



LEWISHAM ASSOCIATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

### ADMINISTRATOR

Salary £11,934 (incl. London Weighting)  
35 hours week (eligible for job share)

We would prefer to appoint a disabled person to this post which entails running our very busy office and dealing with personal callers and telephone queries. Essential qualifications are experience of benefits advice, knowledge of disability issues and reasonable keyboard skills. Applicants must demonstrate organisational abilities, tact and sensitivity.

LAPD office is wheelchair accessible

No description and application form (available in large print and on tape) from:

LAPD, 67 Engleheart Road, Catford SE6 2HN. Tel: 081-698 3775.

Closing date: Friday 19 February

**GLAD**

London's leading disability organisation, has two vacancies in our Equal Opportunities Team.

### WOMEN'S OFFICER

Develop and support a network of disabled women in London.

Candidates must be disabled women and must have experience of community or development work (paid or unpaid).

This post is full time (35 hours p.w.). Eighteen months fixed term contract.

### TRAINING OFFICER

Work with small groups of disabled people developing self confidence and self advocacy skills.

Candidates must be disabled people and must have experience of delivering training.

This post is part time (20 hours p.w.). Twelve months fixed term contract.

Candidates for both posts must be committed to equal opportunities. Salary for both posts: £16,191 (inc. London Weighting) Scale 6, Spinal Point 26. (pro rata for part time).

Closing dates for both posts 19th February 1993.

Further details from: Admin & Finance, Greater London Association of Disabled People, 5 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA, tel: 071-274 0107, stating which post you are interested in.

**TO ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCIES/COURSES**  
please contact the Advertisement Manager, Richard Gresham, Kingslea Press Ltd, 12 Dock Offices, Surrey Quays Road, London SE16 2XU. Tel: 071-252 1362. Fax: 071-237 8019.

### NEWS QUIZ ANSWERS

1. One in seven
2. Graham Gooch
3. Evelyn Glennie
4. Mark Thatcher
5. They left their children behind to go on holiday.
6. Marje Proops
7. American intervention in Somalia
8. Kenya
9. Radio Luxembourg
10. Colorado

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1. Guide dog  
6. Olive 7. Endive  
8. Fungi 11. No clothes  
12. Ruler 13. Punish  
15. To 16. Wrench  
19. Roe 20. Notaries  
24. Thence 25. Buyer  
DOWN: 1. Green 2. Indecent 3. Envious 4. Golfer  
5. Sign 9. Usurer  
10. Greece 13. Punnet  
14. Iota 17. Noddy  
18. Pipe 21. Tee 22. Sob  
23. Par

## MEETING THE FUTURE WITH CONFIDENCE SERVICES FOR ADULTS

Here at the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames we are proud of what we have achieved over the past few years. With an emphasis on client-based specialisms, we have reorganised our internal structure in response to community care legislation and placed increased importance on providing a creative and flexible approach whilst maintaining the highest professional standards. We are now looking for the following individuals to enhance our Services for Adults division.

### 2 Rehabilitation Officers

**£15,213 to £17,817 (Scale 6/SO1) inc. p.a.**

We have vacancies for 2 Rehabilitation Officers, one of which is a new post, to work in a new team for people with disabilities based in the provider unit of Services for Adults Division.

We need experienced and well motivated people who will offer a service to people with visual impairments. They will be expected to contribute to developments as the Department moves towards promoting and improving services to this customer group. The Borough has a clear service philosophy and aims to enable people with a visual impairment to participate in the planning, development and provision of services.

The Department places a high priority on regular supervision and training. Prospective candidates should be qualified Rehabilitation Officers.

Information pack and application form from Personnel Section, Social Services Department, 42 York Street, Twickenham TW1 3BW. Telephone 081 891 7635 (24 hour answering service). Please quote Ref. SS/A/827. Closing date for receipt of completed application forms is 5.00 pm on 12 February 1993.



LONDON BOROUGH OF  
RICHMOND UPON THAMES

*an equal opportunities employer*

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HEREFORDSHIRE LIFESTYLES

Salary £21,462 p.a.

A challenging opportunity has opened up for a proactive, experienced professional in the field of training and development for disabled people to make a major impact on the operation and progress of an established and innovative registered charity.

Herefordshire Lifestyles at its inception was unique in enabling disabled participants, through partnerships, to maximise their independence in all aspects of their lives. The concept has now been taken up nationally with an active network of Lifestyle organisations. We offer initially a two year contract, working under Local Government Pay Scale, to direct the charity's operations while actively evaluating the effectiveness of our self-advocacy approach compared to the purchaser/provider model and the contracting process.

The successful candidate should have a proven track record in managing training and development for disabled people and be committed to the social model of disability. Good presentational skills are essential as is an understanding of both the voluntary and statutory networks.

Lifestyles is an Equal Opportunities employer. Applications from people with disabilities are warmly encouraged and the premises are accessible.

Those interested in applying for this demanding post can obtain further details from the Secretary to the Directors, 15 St Owen Street, Hereford HR1 2JB. Telephone Number: (0432) 277968.

Closing date for applications is February 19th 1993.

# Disability Now

*The campaigning newspaper for people with all kinds of disabilities*

Please SUPPORT DN by SUBSCRIBING NOW

### DISABILITY NOW SUBSCRIPTION ORDER

Please return to Disability Now, 12 Park Crescent, FREEPOST 17 London W1E 3HU with your remittance made payable to DISABILITY NOW. No stamp is needed.

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Disability Now is a non-profit making publication. It is sent free to disabled people on low income if they let us know.

\* Multiple copies  
2 copies £24, 3 copies £36, 4 copies £48, 5 copies £60, 6 copies £72,  
10-50 copies £100, 51-100 copies £125. One year (12 issues) only.



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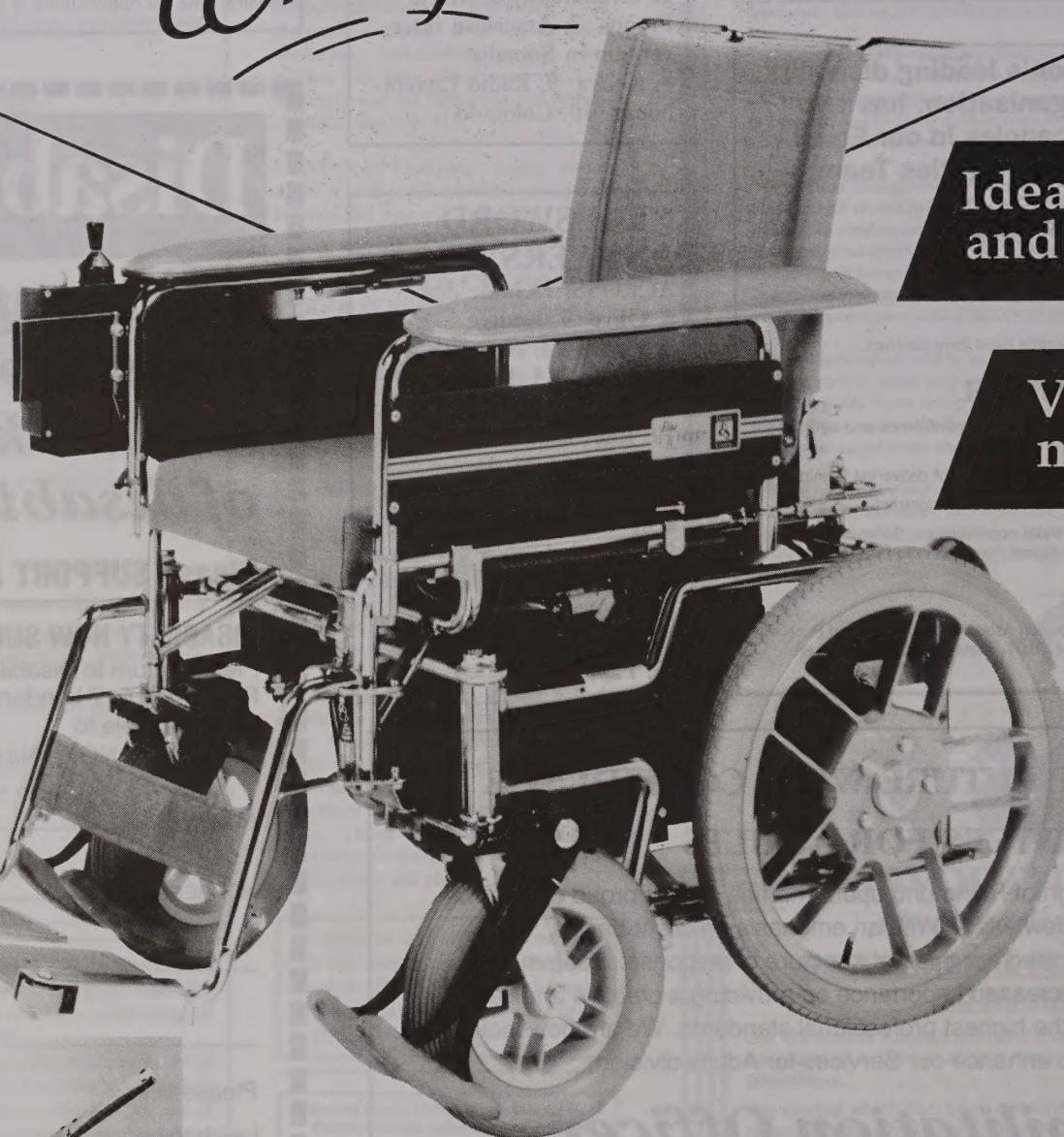
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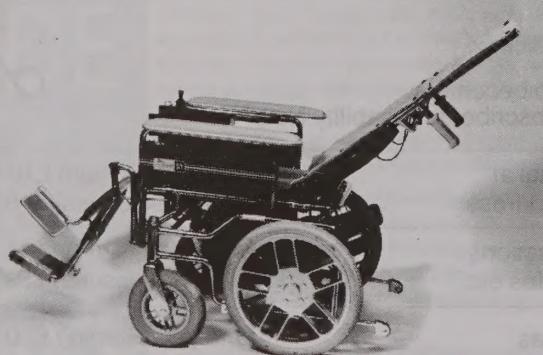
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